



# Growing with Others

## Digital Guide



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## About this publication

This report summarises the research activities carried out by the consortium partners to define a competency map based on an updated analysis of needs and in-depth benchmark research due to the progress of COVID-19 (sixth wave) and its continuous consequences in 45+ adults, within the Erasmus+ project PRIORITY45: Promoting employment of 45+ adults through a disruptive training approach (Cooperation partnerships in adult education, project number: 2022-1-PT01-KA220- ADU-000087183).

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# Introduction

The primary aim of Module 2 is to provide a comprehensive guide tailored for our target group, facilitating the enhancement of transversal skills in line with the overarching goals of the project. Specifically, the skills emphasised in this module will interest your way of interacting with others, being part of a team, or leading it and even enhancing personal skills like emotional intelligence or active listening! But for whom is all this information? And why should I care about them?

**The main target groups for our project are:**

- **45+ adults, both in and out of work who seek to enhance their transversal skills to be able to adapt to the current labour market.**
- **Micro and small companies that want to support their employees on their re/upskilling objectives to improve the quality of their workforce.**

This module presents an ideal opportunity for enhancing one's soft skills, thereby cultivating a multifaceted professional profile helpful to thriving in the competitive job market. Additionally, it serves as a platform for refining critical competencies like communication and emotional intelligence, which are pivotal not only in professional settings but also in navigating the complexities of daily life. Now let's see what you will encounter in this module.

This module focuses on the development of transversal skill that regards your interaction with others and your ability to manage such interaction.

**This module will focus on:**

- **Leadership**
- **Communication**
- **Active Listening**
- **Teamwork**
- **Cooperation**
- **Interaction with others**
- **Emotional intelligence**
- **Social skills**

In each of these units, you will find both practical and theoretical material to better help your engagement and test your knowledge.

# Module Structure

Units	Learning outcomes	Content
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define leadership</li> <li>Recognise the importance and competence of leadership</li> <li>Understand different types of leadership</li> <li>Know advantages and disadvantages of different leadership styles</li> <li>Recognise the differences between leader and boss.</li> <li>Recognise the skills to be a good leader</li> </ul>	<p>Leadership</p> <p>Functions of leadership</p> <p>Types/styles of leadership</p> <p>Skills to be an effective leader</p>
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe communication styles</li> <li>Identify positive and negative aspects of communication styles</li> <li>Identify strategies to communicate successfully</li> <li>Recognise the importance of assertiveness in daily life communication</li> </ul>	<p>Communication styles</p> <p>Strategies to communicate successfully</p> <p>Assertiveness</p> <p>Body language</p>

Units	Learning outcomes	Content
Active Listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe the importance of active listening in personal and professional contexts</li> <li>• Identify different techniques to improve communication</li> <li>• Identify distractors in communication situations</li> <li>• Use verbal and non-verbal signals to encourage the speaker to talk</li> </ul>	<p>Definition and importance of active listening</p> <p>Verbal and non-verbal communication</p> <p>Barriers to active listening</p> <p>Techniques for active listening</p>
Teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define the concept of teamwork and its benefits</li> <li>• Identify the better skills to improve teamwork</li> <li>• Recognise strategies that promote a better teamwork environment</li> </ul>	<p>Teamwork</p> <p>Benefits of teamwork</p> <p>Skills to improve teamwork</p> <p>Strategies to promote a better teamwork environment</p>

Units	Learning outcomes	Content
<b>Cooperation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the importance of cooperation and its benefits in the workplace</li> <li>• Identify strategies to improve cooperation and common effort</li> <li>• Recognise relevant strategies that can improve this skill in the workplace</li> </ul>	<p>Cooperation</p> <p>Benefits of cooperation in the workplace environment</p> <p>Strategies to improve cooperation</p>
<b>Interaction with Others</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the importance of good and proper communication with others</li> <li>• Identify strategies and good practises that can improve proper behaviour with others, understanding and respecting boundaries</li> <li>• Recognise rules of respect and tolerance in the workplace and other contexts</li> </ul>	<p>Basis of interaction</p> <p>Benefits of a good and positive interaction with others</p> <p>Rules of respect and tolerance</p> <p>How to respect and establish healthy boundaries</p>

Units	Learning outcomes	Content
<b>Emotional Intelligence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define emotional intelligence</li> <li>• Understand the importance of recognising and managing own emotions and those of others</li> <li>• Identify strategies related to the development of emotional intelligence</li> </ul>	<p>Emotional intelligence</p> <p>Benefits of improving emotional intelligence in the workplace environments</p> <p>Strategies to improve emotional intelligence</p> <p>Emotional intelligence on a lifelong approach</p>
<b>Social Skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the importance and methods of conflict resolution</li> <li>• Identify the importance and methods of conflict resolution</li> <li>• Identify the terms and elements of relationship management</li> <li>• Analyse the importance and methods of conflict resolution</li> </ul>	<p>Conflict resolution</p> <p>Relationship management</p> <p>Intergenerational relationships</p>





U n i t 0 1  
**Leadership**

## Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module, participants shall be able to:



**Define leadership**

**Recognise the importance** and competence of leadership

**Recognise** the differences between **leader** and **boss**

**Recognise** the **skills** to be a good leader

**Understand** different **types** of leadership

**Know advantages** and **disadvantages** of different leadership styles

## Content

**Leadership**

**Functions** of leadership

**Types/styles** of leadership

**Skills** to be an effective leader

## Introduction

Leadership skills are crucial in various aspects of life, including personal, professional, and societal. A leader can express thoughts, listen actively, and constructively navigate conflicts. Leaders set personal goals, stay motivated, and inspire others to do the same. A leader could help to solve conflict situations, to adapt to unexpected circumstances. Leaders are highly valued in society because they can influence positive societal change by advocating for important causes, inspiring collective action, and serving as role models for others; and in companies could inspire teams increasing productivity and job satisfaction.

Consider that, leadership skills can help you navigate challenges, foster positive relationships, influence in others and achieve personal and professional growth.

Acquiring leadership skills is essential for young people but also for people beyond 45 because effective leadership plays a pivotal role in guiding, motivating and inspiring individuals and teams to achieve their full potential and work towards common goals. Leadership can enable you to lead and inspire others effectively, facilitate cooperation, and drive progress in a wide range of contexts.

Also, it is important to become familiar with all the essential aspects of leadership. Furthermore, it is key to understand the concept, characteristics, theories, and styles of leadership to choose in the different situations about the most effective leadership style. Through this unit, you will become familiar with all the essential aspects of leadership. Also, you will get acquainted with the concept, characteristics, theories, and styles of leadership. The learning unit will point out key differences in different leadership styles, and a number of topics that are part of effective leadership.

You will discover what leadership is and you will recognise the importance and competence of leadership, by understanding different types of leadership and being capable of analysing advantages and disadvantages of the different styles. Furthermore, you will also recognise what are the differences about how leaders and bosses influence on a team in different aspects and understand and recognise their differences and effects. Finally, you will be capable to recognise the potential skills to be a good leader.

## Leadership

Leaders are found and required in most aspects of society, from business to politics, from region to community-based organisations.

There are multiple definitions of leadership. If we start in an academic way, we can start with a common definition about what is leadership which is the ability to influence, motivate, and guide individuals or groups towards achieving shared goals; **but it is difficult to define, there are many more definitions with certain key points like:**



- Generally, leaders have the ability to make strategic and visionary decisions and convince others to follow those decisions
- Leaders create a vision and can successfully get others to work toward achieving that goal
- They set direction and inspire others to achieve the result
- Leaders get people excited and motivated to work toward the vision

Also, it is said that leadership is the ability of an individual or a group of individuals to influence and guide followers or other members of an organisation. Furthermore, **leadership involves:**

- Making decisions
- Creating, and articulating a clear vision
- Establishing achievable goals
- Providing followers with the knowledge and tools necessary to achieve those goals.

Moreover, being a leader is considered like being a master, a trainer, someone that inspires others to generate their own visions and motivations towards the goals and values of their own human teams; the leader also serves as a model, leader wants the human team to develop so they get motivated to achieve goals.

In order that you can understand it better, some main features to summarise of the different possible definitions of leadership could be extracted

- **It is a process:** It is a set of phases to achieve some objectives
- **Implies direction:** The leader leads a group of people toward objectives
- **Uses non-coercive methods:** no domination, intimidation or incitement over others to guide them towards the goal
- **Through leadership, combined interests are intended to be satisfied**
- **Implies a long-term perspective:** Long-term goals are achieved through short-term actions
- **Implies the development of the skills of the leader and the employees to carry out their tasks**
- **As social being, communication between the leader and the team becomes necessary**

Something to take into account is that ethics and leadership go hand-in-hand

Those who tend to think there is a choice to make between being profitable or behaving ethically are wrong! In fact, you, as leader, can inspire those around you to behave ethically, so being an ethical leader could be essential for your own credibility and reputation or for the credibility of the company or organization to which you belong.

## Functions of leadership

As it was said there are not a unique notion of leader and there is not a unique way of leading, but there are a lot of functions related with leading.



**With this you can understand the importance of having a good leader**

### — Setting a vision

A key function of leadership is to define a clear and inspiring vision for the future. Leaders articulate a compelling destination that motivates and guides the team. Imagine a coach in a young football team fixing the objectives of enjoying and learning about cooperation and fair play for his/her players.

### — Inspiration and motivation

Leaders inspire and motivate individuals to work toward the shared vision. They create enthusiasm, commitment, and a sense of purpose among their followers. In most cases, leaders with their own example could increase the commitment of the others to achieve the goals. Think of a leader who does not behave as he or she should, this would affect the group a lot.

### — Setting objectives/stablishing goals

Leaders prioritise goals, create action plans, allocate resources, and define key performance indicators to measure progress. Objectives should be reachable, realistic, motivating and fitting with the vision of the group or the company. A good example is the leader who is fixing milestones which bring the group closer to their overall goals in that way, people could know if they are approaching to the objective.

### — Creating a Path Forward

Leaders guide the group in determining the path or strategy needed to reach the set objectives. They analyse the situation, consider available resources, and develop plans or frameworks to move the group forward. This involves making decisions, outlining action steps, and allocating resources effectively. Sometimes, in the group it is not known how to act or which direction to follow, in this case the leader is fundamental to guide the others.



### — Communicating Expectations

Leaders communicate the goals and objectives to the team clearly and concisely. They articulate what needs to be achieved, why it is important, and how success will be measured. Connection between the leader and the rest of the team is a key factor to attain objectives. Choosing an adequate channel of communication can make communication successful. Depending on the conditions and situations in place, some channels will be more appropriate than others. A leader must know how to communicate with the others.

### — Creating Action Plans

Leaders work with the team to create detailed action plans that outline the steps and responsibilities needed to achieve the goals. These plans provide a roadmap for implementation. For example, imagine that you want your flat will be cleaned by all the members of the family, a timeline for developing which specific tasks and by whom and when will be useful.

### — Problem-Solving

When obstacles or challenges arise, leaders use their problem-solving skills to address issues that may impede goal attainment. They maintain a solution-oriented approach.



You can learn more about **“Problem-solving”** in **Module 4** of PRIORITY45 Course!

### — Conflict Resolution

Leaders address conflicts or disputes within the team promptly and constructively. They mediate and find solutions to maintain a harmonious working environment. Sometimes the leader has to solve misunderstandings between the members of the group.



### — Organising

Leaders take several key actions to ensure that their teams are well-organised and functioning effectively. They assign specific roles and responsibilities to each team member. They ensure that each individual's tasks align with their skills and expertise. Even they could decide and design how tasks and information flow within the team, optimising productivity and reducing bottlenecks. It is important that the leader know the others to realise about what they can do better.

### — Promoting Collaboration

Leaders encourage collaboration and teamwork. They foster an environment where team members can share ideas, offer support, and work together to achieve common objectives.

### — Mentoring and Development

Leaders invest in the professional growth of their team members. They provide guidance, offer opportunities for skill development, and encourage career advancement. For example: An instructor leading a group fitness class serves as a mentor, helping participants achieve their health and fitness goals. Or an older person can guide young people with his or her experience.

### — Control and supervision

Controlling and supervision are essential functions of leadership that involve overseeing the work and performance of a team to ensure that goals are being met and that the team is functioning effectively. Leaders regularly track and assess the team's progress toward meeting performance standards. This may involve reviewing work outputs, project milestones, or key performance indicators. An example of this is a Beach lifeguard supervisor who oversees the team of lifeguards who are controlling the beach, this person analyses the performance of the others and give advice.



### — Give feedback

Leaders play a crucial role in giving feedback that is clear, timely, balanced, respectful, and goal-oriented. It is recommended that they express their observations and insights straightforwardly and understandably. They must create an environment where feedback is seen as a tool for personal and professional growth and development, fostering continuous improvement within the team or organisation. If it is effective, this feedback will help individuals to reach their full potential and align their efforts with the team's goals. For example, a teacher is giving feedback to the students about how they have done a written project.

## Types/styles of leadership

Leadership is a multifaceted concept that takes on various forms and styles, adapting to the unique needs of different situations and organisations. Understanding the different types of leadership is essential for both aspiring leaders and those seeking effective guidance inside their teams. For that, it is important to analyse the different types of leadership, focusing on their defining characteristics, advantages, disadvantages, and applications. By comprehending these leadership styles, individuals can better adapt and decide what are the most adequate style according to the situation, the context and the team members, enhancing their effectiveness.



**Types of leadership can be effective in different situations.**

### Autocratic leadership

In this style, the leader makes decisions independently, expecting team members to follow their directives without question. This approach can be **effective in situations requiring quick, centralised decision-making, such as in emergencies**. It is adequate for stable environments and low-skilled jobs and can be useful for achieving short-term goals. On the other hand, can stifle creativity and initiative among team members, lead to disengagement, and create a sense of dissatisfaction, in the long term, may also limit the development of team members and hinder their ability to think critically.

### Bureaucratic leadership

Is characterised by strict adherence to established rules, policies, and procedures. Leaders in this style rely heavily on authority and the organisation's established hierarchy, prioritising consistency, predictability, and adherence to regulations. Advantages include a structured and organised environment, clarity in roles and responsibilities but could lead to inefficiency and slow responses to changing circumstances and it may foster a rigid and less motivated work environment.

## Charismatic leadership

Is characterised by leaders who exude exceptional personal magnetism and inspire strong emotional connections with their followers. They possess the ability to captivate and influence others through their charm, vision, and enthusiasm. Advantages of charismatic leadership include the ability to motivate and rally people behind a compelling vision, creating a strong sense of purpose and engagement. But it could create over-dependence and a lack of focus on long-term sustainability and also have the risk that the leader departs or their charisma fades.



## Democratic leadership

In this style, it is involved the team members in the decision-making process. Leaders encourage open communication, seek input and feedback from their team, and collaborate to reach consensus on important matters. This approach fosters a sense of inclusivity, ownership, and shared responsibility, which can enhance team morale, creativity, and satisfaction. However, it can sometimes slow down the decision-making process, and in situations requiring quick or decisive action, it may not be the most efficient leadership style. Additionally, reaching consensus can be challenging, and there is a risk of over-reliance on input from team members, potentially leading to indecisiveness or a lack of clear direction.

## Laissez-faire leadership

Gives considerable autonomy and independence to the team members, so the responsibility lies on them, while the leader plays a passive role, decisions are taken by the team. This style can be effective with a self-motivated and skilled team, as it encourages creativity and personal initiative, but it is possible potential confusion or lack of direction in the absence of strong leadership, and the risk of tasks not being completed or not meeting required standards; also it is not suitable in situations with inexperienced or unmotivated team members.

### Transactional leadership

Is characterised by a structured and results-oriented approach, where leaders use a system of rewards and punishments to motivate their team members. It is effective for achieving specific tasks and goals. This style is not focused on the development of members and relying on punitive measures, such as reprimands or demotions, can lead to a negative and fear-driven work environment, which can demoralise team members and hinder collaboration.

### Transformational leadership

This style can be highly effective when an organisation needs innovation, and when the team members are motivated by a compelling vision and personal growth opportunities. Transformational leadership is a leadership style that centres on inspiring and motivating individuals to achieve exceptional results while fostering their personal growth. Transformational leaders are known for their compelling vision, charisma, and ability to energize and engage their followers. These leaders stimulate creativity and critical thinking, encouraging their teams to explore innovative ideas. The disadvantages lie in the high expectations it sets, which can lead to stress and burnout among team members, potential over-reliance on the charismatic leader for direction, resistance to change in some team members, and less effective in immediate crisis situations.

### Situational leadership

When team members have varying levels of competence and commitment, situational leadership allows leaders to tailor their approach to meet the specific needs of each individual or situation. Leaders assess the readiness of their followers and adjust their leadership style accordingly, shifting between directive and supportive behaviours. This individualized approach can empower team members, boost team morale, and facilitate conflict resolution, ultimately contributing to improved overall team performance and development. While it offers flexibility, allowing leaders to meet the specific needs of their team members, it also requires constant evaluation, which can be time-consuming. Moreover, some team members may find the frequent changes in leadership style confusing or may feel that their leader is inconsistent in their approach..

The most **effective leaders** are often those who can **adapt** their leadership style to the specific situation.

## Distinguishing Leaders from Bosses

Finally, it could be useful to understand the difference between leader and boss because it is not the same concept, although in some cases, it is the same person, and some types of leaders are similar to what a boss is considered.

- **The concept of boss is mainly associated with authority.** The rest of the team are subordinates. In leadership, there is an element of wilfulness, so a leader has followers, leaders earn the respect and trust of their team members through their actions and character.
- **Leadership moves towards people, while the boss leads towards the system.**
- **It can be said that the exercising of authority in leadership is more flexible, while a boss focuses on power.**
- **A leader inspires confidence, while a boss tends towards the thorough control of the different activities.**
- **Leaders ask themselves “what?” and “why?”.** On the other hand, bosses look for the way to do something and when will be the objective achieved.
- **Bosses typically use commands on their communication, with limited feedback, usually they do not explain why is needed to do that.** They emphasise giving orders and strict instructions. Leaders prioritise open and transparent communication. They encourage bidirectional communication, actively listen to their team, and provide constructive feedback.

- Leadership looks for innovation and is ready to take risks and to research to improve. Bosses focus on management and trying to avoid mistakes.
- Bosses focus in doing things right. On the other hand, leaders do what is right in each circumstance.
- Bosses often make decisions independently and expect subordinates to follow without question. Leaders involve their team members in decision-making, valuing their input and collaboration.

## Recap

### **Boss** characteristics

- Associated with Authority
- Team seen as subordinates
- Focus on power and control
- Thorough Control of Activities
- Asks “How?” and “when?”
- Commands in Communication
- Emphasizes giving orders
- Independent decision-making

### **Leaders** characteristics

- Element of wilfulness by the others
- Earns respect and trust
- Is depending on the people
- Flexible exercise of authority
- Inspires confidence
- Asks “What?” and “Why?”
- Prioritises open communication
- Encourages bidirectional feedback
- Value the contributions

“ The key difference between a boss and a leader lies in their approach to authority, motivation, confidence, communication, and decision-making. It is considered that to be more effective, it is recommended to have both roles in the same person. ”



## Skills to be an effective leader

Now, you are prepared to analyse and understand the skills to be an effective leader. An effective leader is the cornerstone of any successful team or organisation, guiding, motivating, and inspiring others to achieve common goals and overcome challenges. It is clear that a person beyond 45 could learn how to be an effective leader.



**It is not late to acquire leadership skills!!!**

The journey to understanding and becoming an effective leader is indeed a complex mixture of influence, communication, decision-making, and adaptability. But it could be done step by step.

It is difficult to enumerate all the skills that an effective leader should have, because it also depends on the leadership style, the context, the team members, the situation; **but we are going to analyse some of the most important points to consider:**

### — Communication skills

A leader must know how to talk as well as to listen with attention. Effective leaders excel in both verbal and written communication, articulating their vision, goals, and expectations clearly and persuasively. They also actively listen to their team members and foster open and transparent dialogue.

**Would you like to know more about Active listening?**

→ **PRIORITY45** virtual course has a unit about this topic.

## — Conflict Resolution

Effective leader has the ability to mediate conflicts and facilitate productive resolutions for maintaining a harmonious team and productive work environment. They must have the ability to deal with disputes, differences of opinion and tensions within a team or organisation in a constructive and positive way.

## — Emotional Intelligence

It is important to have high emotional intelligence to understand and manage their emotions and those of their team members, enabling them to empathise, build strong relationships, and solve conflicts effectively.

Would you like to know more about Emotional Intelligence?

→ PRIORITY45 virtual course has a unit about this topic.

Would you like to know more about Time Management?

→ PRIORITY45 virtual course has a unit about this topic.

## — Time Management

Leaders should manage their time efficiently to prioritise tasks, meet deadlines, and ensure that essential goals are achieved. Effective time management not only enhances productivity but also enables leaders to stay agile, responsive to changing circumstances, and well-prepared for critical decision-making, fostering their capacity to lead with precision and meet overarching objectives.

## — Strategic thinking

A good leader knows how to be ready for the future but living in the present. This involves the ability to envision and plan for the long-term future of an organisation or team. Leaders with strong strategic thinking skills can devise comprehensive plans to achieve their vision, allocate resources wisely, and adapt to evolving circumstances.

## — Decision-Making

Strong decision-making skills involve the ability to analyse complex situations, assess risks, consider various options and make well-informed choices, often in a timely manner. Leaders who excel in decision-making inspire confidence and trust among their team members, fostering a positive work environment. In the current situation, leaders must be capable of dealing with uncertainties and making fast choices to achieve the team's objectives.

## — Adaptability

Leaders should be flexible and adaptable, ready to respond to changing circumstances and guiding teams through challenges. Embracing diverse perspectives, valuing feedback, and fostering creativity, they create an environment where change is not merely tolerated but seen as an opportunity for improvement.

## — Knowing how to delegate

Effective leaders know how to delegate, empowering team members by distributing tasks strategically. They assess strengths, align tasks with skills, and provide resources for success. Delegation, for these leaders, is not just offloading work but fostering team growth. Skilful delegation makes it possible to increase productivity, heightened morale, and a collaborative, high-performing work environment, ensuring goal achievement.

## — Team Building

Leaders should be skilled in assembling and developing cohesive, high-performing teams. They foster trust and mutual support, extending beyond initial formation to provide continuous support, feedback, and recognition. Effective team building empowers individuals to grow, learn, and thrive collectively. Such leaders inspire commitment, elevate morale, and create a dynamic work culture.



## — Inclusivity

Inclusive leaders embrace diversity. They recognise diverse perspectives enhances possibilities for achieving objectives. This skill encourages individuals to bring their whole selves to work, supporting innovation, harmony, and empowerment within the team.

## — Ability to motivate

Motivational leaders create a powerful vision, emphasising task significance and instilling purpose in their teams. Recognising individual achievements, offering constructive feedback, and providing support, they boost morale and drive productivity. This skill fosters commitment, loyalty, and a dynamic, engaged workforce, achieving both immediate goals and long-term team cultivation.



**Finally, to summarise, commonly, if you want to be an effective leader you must develop the following skills or characteristics:**

- Good communication ability
- Know how to solve conflicts
- Manage and use emotions
- Manage time efficiently
- Strategic way of thinking,
- Ability to analyse complex situations and take decisions
- Give responses to changing circumstances
- Ability to delegate and to create teams
- Manage diversity
- Capability to motivate others



**Remind** that you have the options of learning more about **Active listening, Emotional Intelligence and Time management** inside **PRIORITY45** virtual course.

## Reflection exercise

A furniture company is going through a critical stage in which its workers do not feel motivated by their routine work. An atmosphere of hostility is starting to form.

Furthermore, the performance of the workers is worse than before. They are not accomplishing their tasks, orders are not sending on time, they are losing clients, supplies are not happy because they are not receiving their money. Workers feel they are just another asset, since they are not relied in decision-making although they feel they are experts in each position and know there is no one better qualified than them for establishing the needs of their functions.

→ Reflect on it and think about the effect of the different styles of leadership.

## Summary

Leadership is a crucial skill to work with teams and groups and it could be trained. There are not a single way of defining or to explain what is the best way of leading a group, it could be depend on situation, context or team members, but it is clear that leadership is accomplishing some functions like setting a vision, inspire and motivate, establishing goals, communicate expectations, create action plans, solve problems or conflicts, organise, promote collaboration, develop others and give feedback.

There are different styles of leadership and there is no one-size-fits-all “best” style of leadership because the most effective leadership style depends on various factors. The different styles of leadership that we have seen in this unit are autocratic, bureaucratic, charismatic, democratic, laissez-faire, transactional, transformational and situational.

Also, it is important to know that a leader and a boss are not exactly the same because a boss is more focused on formalised power and a leader earns respect through their actions and character.

Finally, it is difficult to enumerate all the skills that an effective leader should have but it could be mentioned communication skills, conflict resolution, emotional intelligence, time management, strategic thinking, decision-making, adaptability, delegation, team building, inclusivity and the ability to motivate.

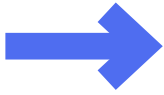


U n i t      0 2  
**Communication**



## Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module, participants shall be able to:



**Describe** communication styles

**Identify** positive and negative **aspects** of communication styles

**Identify strategies** to communicate successfully

**Recognise** the **importance** of assertiveness in daily life communication.

## Content

Communication styles

Strategies to communicate successfully

Assertiveness

Body language

## Introduction

### Have you ever thought about how communication is like the lifeblood of our existence?

How does it allow us to create meaning and understanding? So, when you are talking to someone, it is not just chatting away, but there is an exchange where you and the other person are both playing a part! In your daily work, is not communication that keeps the wheels turning, making things happen, boosting teamwork and productivity? Or sometimes having the opposite effect? And outside the work, thinking on your personal life: is not communication that allows you to connect and create bonds? To make friends, to be a family? On a broader scale, consider how communication knits societies together

### How do you see the impact of communication in your world?

Think about your communication style and how can it create a unique way to connect with people. In this unit you will deepen your knowledge of Communication, enabling you to become a more perceptive and competent communicator.

**Let's also talk about assertiveness and how can mastering this art make your interactions better.** And the world of body language? Understanding and using it can totally change the way you communicate and read others.

## Communication styles

Communication styles refer to the ways individuals express themselves and interact with others. These styles encompass both verbal and non-verbal behaviours, tone of voice, facial expressions, body language, along with patterns of communication [1].

### Now, how can you improve it?

And what are the communication styles used by the people around you?

There are about **five main styles**, but here is the catch: people can switch things up depending on the situation, who they are talking to, and what is being said.



In general terms, communication also involves knowing which style to use for the intended purpose. Also, avoid rigidly sticking to a single style when interacting with a variety of people during your workday or personal life. After all, being flexible is the name of the game.

Each communication style can stir up all sorts of feelings and reactions. It can make people feel empowered, ticked off, trusted, or maybe even a little guilty.





**In multicultural societies like the Europeans, it is important to have intercultural communication skills.**

Here are some tips[3]:

→ **Embrace diversity**

Stay open to all cultures, no matter how distinct they may be.

→ **Actively explore other cultures**

Travel, if possible, and immerse yourself in various backgrounds.

→ **Learn about cultural challenges and history**


Understand the journey and sacrifices made by others that paved the way for our opportunities.

→ **Avoid assumptions**

Invest time in learning and truly listening.

→ **Show respect and kindness.**

Foster better communication and create an inclusive, positive work and social environment.



**How do you think your style affects those around you?[1]**

## Aggressive style



Have you ever been in a conversation where winning is the only goal, and it feels like a battlefield?

This is when the way you say things matters as much as what you say. This communication style marked by hostility, threats, and a firm desire to win at any expense; the person behaves as if their contribution to the conversation holds greater importance than others.

This style can be a plus when you need to take a stand or make quick decisions, and in leadership roles, it can even be a plus in certain situations, as it shows confidence. However, the downside is that too much aggression often leads to conflict, tension relationships, and makes others defensive.

### Some examples:

“

*“This mistake is entirely your fault, and you need to fix it now.”*

*“You never do anything right. It's like you're completely useless.”*

*“I don't have time to listen to your ideas; they're not important.”*”

”

## Passive style



Have you ever come across the “people-pleaser” communicator?



They are the ones who hate rocking the boat, always keeping calm and avoiding conflicts. Although this style may have good results in the workplace – for example, as a response to aggressive situations, particularly with challenging clients - passive communicators are not necessarily happy.

In fact, this approach can lead to the accumulation of resentment over time because individuals struggle to effectively communicate their opinions, needs, and desires.

### Some examples:

“

*“I guess it is not a big deal. We can go with your suggestion if you want.”*

*“I’m sorry to bother you, but could you maybe take a look at this if you have time?”*

*“I didn’t want to say no, so I agreed to take on the extra work.”*”

”

## Passive-aggressive style

This communication style is like a mix of staying calm on the surface and hiding some boiling aggression underneath. It happens when people get sardonic, drop hints, or spread rumours. In the workplace, this style can be a real troublemaker, causing conflicts and complaints. In a business setting, there are no circumstances where this style of communication is considered appropriate.

### Some examples:



*"I did not attend the meeting because I thought my input was not really needed."*

*"I guess some people can work under these chaotic conditions, but it is not for everyone."*

*"Oh, great, another surprise deadline. That is exactly what I needed."*



## Manipulative style

A person who uses a manipulative communication style is quite an expert at scheming and deceit in conversations. They like to hide their true intentions behind a curtain of tricks and tactics to control things their way[4].

On the upside, a little manipulation can be handy in certain customer-facing roles to smooth things out in tricky situations. However, this style often feels insincere and can erode trust when people realize they have been played. And in team settings, manipulation can lead to conflicts and damaged relationships.

### Some examples:



*"I do not know why you're so upset. I never said that, and you must be remembering it wrong."*

*"I thought you might be interested in this task, but it is okay if you don't feel up to it."*

*"You are doing a great job, but I heard some colleagues saying they expected even more from you."*



## Assertive style

The assertive communication style is often considered the most effective. It is all about confidence without dominating others.

What is really great about this style is that assertive individuals aim for compromise and consensus. They prioritize **active listening** and ensure their wants and needs are clearly communicated.

One key feature of assertive communication is the use of “I” statements. Instead of making accusations like “You always give me too much work,” they express their feelings and needs with statements like “I feel overwhelmed when my workload is heavy.”

In the next part of this unit, we’ll take a closer look at assertiveness, because it’s not only extremely important in the workplace, but also incredibly valuable in personal and social interactions.

**Would you like to know more about Active listening?**

→ PRIORITY45 virtual course has a unit about this topic.

**Some examples:**

“

*“Your presentation was good, and with a few adjustments, it can be excellent. Here are some suggestions.”*

*“I believe we can find a solution that benefits both parties. Let’s discuss our concerns and reach a compromise.”*

*“I’m not sure I understand your proposal completely. Can you explain it in more detail?”*

”



## Strategies to communicate successfully

How can you rock the art of successful communication?



Well, it is more than just passing information back and forth. It is about getting the feels and intentions, delivering your message clearly, and making the other person feel valued and heard.

Even though it seems like something easy to all of us, let's be real – misunderstandings, frustrations, and full-blown conflicts often sneak in, whether it is at home or work.

### So, what is the secret sauce to enhance your communication?



**Effective communication** can improve social and emotional health, since it can be implemented in the work field, in family or between friends; moreover, it can deepen the connection with others [5].

## How can I do it?

### 1. Cultivate attentive listening

Effective communication is less about making noise and more about true understanding. Engaged listening is the secret sauce. It is not just about hearing words but instead connecting with the vibes and emotions in someone's voice.

#### — How?

##### → Empathise with the person in front of you

Stay away from your phone or something that is upsetting your mind. Take attention to the clues (look at the non-verbal language, the voice tone).

##### → Favour your right ear

Believe it or not, the left side of your brain deals with speech and emotions. And here is the best bit: it is your best friend because it is connected to the right side of your body. So, if you want to pick up all the emotional vibes of someone's conversation, emphasise your right ear.

### 2. “Look beyond what I do not say”

Nonverbal communication, or body language, speaks higher. It encompasses facial expressions, gestures, eye contact, posture, and even your tone of voice. Because it is a big part of mastering communication, we are devoting a whole chapter to it in this unit.

### 3. Keep it crystal clear!

Turn on the **5 C's of communication** to ensure your message is:

Clear

Correct

Complete

Concise

Compassionate



Let's think about some of the barriers to communication and why they can be negative for dialogue and for the correct transmission of information to your interlocutor.

## Common barriers to effective communication

### — Stress an

Do you feel unhappy at work a lot? If your job does not make you feel good or interested, it might not be the right fit for you.

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### — Stress an

Do you feel unhappy at work a lot? If your job does not make you feel good or interested, it might not be the right fit for you.

## Assertiveness

We have all heard people say: **“You need to be more assertive!”**.

As we previously saw in this unit, assertiveness is a communication style. It implies being able to express your feelings, thoughts, beliefs, and opinions in an open manner that does not violate the rights of others.

**Assertiveness** is a skill that can be developed over time. However, there are some suggestions that can help you in this improvement of yourself and your relationship with others[6], [5], [1].

**Compassionate**

We have all heard people say

**Compassionate**

We have all heard people say

**Compassionate**

We have all heard people say

**Compassionate**

We have all heard people say

**Compassionate**

We have all heard people say

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We have all heard people say

**Compassionate**

We have all heard people say

**Compassionate**

We have all heard people say

## Body language

As previously anticipated, we are devoting a whole chapter to body language because it is a big part of mastering communication. But what is body language?

Body language is the way we communicate without words, using physical behaviours like facial expressions, body posture, gestures, eye movements, touch, and even how we use our personal space. Interestingly, a lot of the time, we do it without consciously thinking about it. It is more about our natural reactions to what we see and experience. In a nutshell, it is a crucial part of how we connect with others and convey our thoughts and feelings [7].

**Did you know that experts suggest nonverbal communication makes up 60-70% of all our communication?**

Body language boosts and magnifies the message we are expressing verbally with the use of hand signals, gestures, and postures. It enables us to communicate emotions and intentions that words alone might not fully capture [8].

## Check some types of non-verbal communication [9]

### Facial expressions

The human face is incredibly expressive and can demonstrate a wide range of emotions. What is also remarkable is that facial expressions, unlike some other nonverbal cues, are universally understood.

### Body movement and posture

Ever notice how you judge people based on how they sit, stand, or move? The way you carry yourself says a lot about you, too.



Standing with your hands on your hips can communicate aggression or a desire to dominate.

Standing up straight with a good posture may help you appear confident.



## Eye contact

The thing with eye contact **is that it is a big deal!** When you look at someone, you are communicating without saying a word. By your eyes, you can show you are interested, annoyed or hostile. Moreover, it helps in keep the flow of conversation.

Try to keep the same eye level as the other person (for example: if someone is in a wheelchair you can try to sit to keep the same eye level). You should also have in mind, that some people might suffer from different disorders which can make them uncomfortable to keep eye contact. People who do look away or avert their gaze when answering a question or when asked a question may just be thinking.

Also, it is important to consider cultural specificities: in Japanese culture, too much eye contact is often considered disrespectful [10]. So, remember to consider the person and the situation in particular.



## Touch

And what about touch? We can give many messages by a handshake or by the way we put a hand on the other person shoulder.

A **firm handshake** can convey confidence and trustworthiness.

A limp handshake might be interpreted as disinterest or insecurity.





The way we place a hand on someone's shoulder may indicate friendship, support, or have a patronizing meaning instead.

Please remember, this can change depending on the individual culture. Some cultures are acceptable if you touch them, others can be considered intrusive or even rude.

## Space

Have you ever been talking with someone, and it feels like “Whoa, too close for comfort”? We all have our bubble, but it varies based on culture, the situation, and how close you are to someone. Your personal space can inform if the person you are communicating with is your friend, is someone stranger; or is being aggressive, or dominant.

## Voice

It is not just the words you use, but how you say them. When you talk, the person is not just hearing your words; is also “reading” your voice. When we hear someone talking, we interpret things as the speed of the voice, how loud you are, your tone, and even those little sounds like “ahh” and “uh-huh” that show you get it.

### What is the difference between an open and closed posture?

An individual adopting an **open posture** is typically relaxed and faces the person they are engaging with and keeps their hands apart. This open posture signals approachability and receptiveness, making it easier to establish a connection.

### If you struggle to maintain an open posture, you can consider mirror techniques.

This involves observing the body language of others and subtly paralleling their expressions or body positions. It is not about copying their every move but rather creating a subtle rapport with the other person.





A closed posture is characterized by actions like crossing one's arms or turning away from the person speaking. These behaviours signify defensiveness and a lack of interest in either the individual or the ongoing conversation.



**Want to know more examples of body language and what it could mean?**

Find some examples below!

### Negative body language<sup>[1]</sup>

Body behaviour	Possible meaning	What can I do?
Arms folded in front of the body. Minimal or tense facial expression. Body turned away from you. Eyes downcast, maintaining little contact.	Disengaged, disinterested or unhappy	Show empathy Explain yourself more clearly, or work to calm a heated situation
Sitting slumped, with head downcast. Gazing at something else, or into space. Fidgeting, picking at clothes, or fiddling with pens and phones. Writing or doodling.	Boredom	You can bring the attention of the person back by asking a straightforward question or by encouraging them to share their thoughts.



## Positive body language

Body behaviour	Possible meaning	What can I do?
Have an open posture Firm handshake Good eye contact Smile	Trust, interest, happiness	Spotting these signs can reassure you that others are engaged with what you're saying and at ease with the situation.

These are some possible meanings for a body's behaviour, but you should not forget that our experience, our life and its events, shape our behaviour. Therefore, our body language can also appear to mean something different to what it actually does.

## Summary

In this unit, we examined the multifaceted concept of communication and its power in "Growing with Others." Effective communication is at the heart of personal and interpersonal growth, and it is a fundamental key for fostering connections and relationships. "Growing with Others" emphasizes personal and collective development through interactions with those around us.

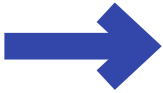
Communication skills are crucial for understanding and collaborating with others. As we explored various aspects of communication in this unit, we recognized how knowing and using these skills are essential for personal growth, not just in our careers but also in our personal lives. The ability to express thoughts and feelings, actively listen, and interpret non-verbal cues empowers individuals to create stronger bonds, resolve conflicts, and work together harmoniously, ultimately aligning with the overarching goals of "Growing with Others."



U n i t 0 3  
A c t i v e  
L i s t e n i n g

## Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module, participants shall be able to:



**Identify** distractors in communication situations

**Identify** different techniques to improve communication

**Describe** the importance of active listening in personal and professional context

**Use** verbal and non-verbal signals to encourage the speaker to talk

## Content

**Barriers** to active listening

**Definition and importance** of active listening

**Techniques** for active listening


**Verbal and non-verbal** communication

## Introduction

Have you ever thought about how important it is to really listen to others, both in your personal life and at work? Sometimes, we focus so much on talking that we forget how crucial it is to listen well. Have you met people who are great at talking but not so good at listening? This can cause problems in understanding each other and building good relationships.

Imagine a time when a friend shared something important with you. How did it feel to really pay attention and show that you understood their feelings?

At work, listening well means understanding what others are saying without interrupting and showing that you're paying attention through your words and actions.



**This unit will help you become a better listener by teaching you skills like paying attention, responding well, and using your body language to show you're listening.**

**You'll also learn how to listen reflectively, ask good questions to understand better, and use both words and body language to encourage open conversations. How do you think these skills will help you in your everyday life and work?**

## Definition and importance of active listening

Communication may appear simple, but it is one of the most complex for people to do.



### Example

- Please find the book “*Origins of Species*” (Ch. Darwin).
- Here is the book “Oranges and peaches”.

In the example above, there is a misunderstanding for similar pronunciation due a homophonic confusion. In this case, we are mishearing or misinterpreting one phrase as another that sounds alike but has a completely different meaning. If a friend tells you to buy one of those books and you have not correctly listened which one is, you can make a big mistake.

For that, and for other multiple reasons, it is important to be focused on active listening, which is a communication technique that involves **the intentional and focused effort to fully understand and engage with a speaker**. It goes beyond simply hearing words and involves giving your undivided attention to the speaker, showing empathy, and demonstrating a genuine interest in what they are saying. Active listeners use verbal and non-verbal cues to signal their engagement, ask clarifying questions, and provide feedback, all with the goal of comprehending the speaker’s message, fostering the relationship, and promoting an effective communication. This practice enhances mutual understanding and promotes more meaningful and productive interactions.

### Have you ever encountered a person who did not listen and was more focused on talking?

You have certainly noticed that in such situations, communication was not fluid, opinions were not exchanged, and a common conclusion was not reached. In those cases, you wonder if your message is getting through or if it is worth keep talking. It is therefore important to be an active listener, but also to show that you are one and to make the other people realise that you are understanding them.

To avoid these problems, active listening is very important, as it promotes the building of trust and rapport and supports the opportunity for improved self-reflection and clarification. People who feel understood do not need to repeat themselves. They communicate more willingly, openly and patiently and are more receptive to listening to the other side.

For sure, you have thought about several reasons which are included on the **following list** but there are multiple reasons why acquire this skill could be important for you, these are some of them:



#### — Enhance Understanding

Active listening allows you to fully comprehend the speaker's message, which is crucial for effective communication and problem-solving. It helps prevent misunderstandings and misinterpretations.

#### — Avoid missing critical information

It enables you to capture and use all the pertinent details in any given situation. It reduces the risk of losing important information.

#### — Improve Relationships

Being an active listener demonstrates respect and empathy toward the speaker, which can strengthen interpersonal relationships, build trust, and enhance rapport.

#### — Develop trust

When people know they can speak freely to you without interruptions, judgment or unwelcome interjections, they are more likely to trust in you.

### — Conflict Resolution

Active listening can help in resolving conflicts by creating an environment where people feel heard and valued. It can reduce tense situations and promote collaboration.

### — Information Retention

When you listen actively, you are more likely to remember and retain information. This can be especially valuable in educational or professional settings.

### — Problem Solving

Active listening enables you to gather all the relevant information and different perspectives before making decisions or finding solutions to problems.

### — Empathy and Support

Actively listening to someone in distress or seeking emotional support can provide comfort and validation, fostering a sense of care and understanding.

### — Professional Success

In the workplace, active listening is a valuable skill for career advancement. It can lead to better collaboration, more effective teamwork, and improved performance.

### — Customer Satisfaction

Active listening is essential in customer service, as it ensures that customers feel heard and valued, leading to higher satisfaction and loyalty.

This information is complementary to the information of the unit about **Communication**



### How many of these reasons had you taken into account?

Active listening is a crucial skill. By developing active listening skills:

- You can **improve** your communication abilities
- You can be **sure** about accurate information received
- You are going to **reduce** misunderstandings
- It is **promoted** empathy and understanding, allowing you to connect deeply with others and build strong relationships based on trust and rapport
- It has an important role in conflict **resolution**



Active listening can be acquired and developed with practice. However, it can be difficult to master and will, therefore, take time and patience to develop.

## Verbal and non-verbal communication

**Active listening** is a two-fold process, encompassing both verbal and non-verbal techniques.. It is very important that you combine both forms of communication in order to make it effective. In many cases, people focus on the verbal and do not consider the non-verbal part, which means that a lot of relevant information is lost in order to understand the message. Moreover, you have to make your verbal and non-verbal signals consistent with each other, and also be attentive to each other's verbal and non-verbal signals to get the whole message.

**Verbal techniques** help you gather information from the words spoken, while non-verbal cues, such as body language and facial expressions, provide additional context. Combining both allows for a more complete understanding of the speaker's message.

Verbal techniques like reflective statements, clarifying questions, summarising and paraphrasing help clarify and confirm your understanding, while non-verbal cues can signal your attentiveness and receptiveness to the speaker's message.



### Example

- Reflective statements: *Speaker*: "I feel really overwhelmed with all the task I have to complete. *Listener*: "It sounds you have a lot to manage right now.
- Clarifying questions: Could you give me an example to clarify?
- Summarising: *Speaker*: "Today, we discussed the main causes of climate change and their potential impact". *Listener*: "So, you covered the reasons behind climate change and what it might lead to". Paraphrasing: *Speaker*: "I believe the key issue here is communication breakdown". *Listener*: "So, you're saying that the main problem is a lack of effective communication".



**Non-verbal** cues like empathetic facial expressions and gestures help convey emotions and empathy, making the speaker feel heard and understood. Open body language and eye contact, build rapport and trust, making the speaker more comfortable sharing their thoughts and concerns. Both verbal and non-verbal techniques provide feedback to the speaker.

The combination of the use of both verbal and non-verbal techniques will show your commitment to understanding, encourages the speaker to express themselves fully, and ultimately leads to more effective and meaningful communication. The combination of these techniques fosters a supportive and empathetic environment that enhances the quality of your interactions with others.

Rapport refers to a harmonious and understanding relationship between people. It involves mutual trust, empathy, and a sense of connection that promotes effective communication and cooperation.

## Barriers to active listening

It is important to consider the barriers that we have to face in active listening which could hinder the ability of using it. Focusing on these barriers, it will be easier to combat them and focus on the message that is reaching us.

## Internal distractions

One of the most significant barriers to active listening is **INTERNAL DISTRACTION**. Our minds are constantly active, generating thoughts and ideas. When we are in a conversation, it is easy for these internal distractions to take the centre stage and make our attention tasks more difficult. Instead of actively listening to the speaker, we may find ourselves thinking about our to-do list, planning our response, or even daydreaming. These internal distractions divert our attention away from the speaker and prevent us from fully engaging in the conversation.

For solving it, the first obvious step is making a conscious effort to prioritise active listening when engaging in a conversation.

Sometimes, it is difficult, one tricky thing is trying to stop the intrusive thoughts with a “**mantra**” word which is a simple word or phrase that you repeat to yourself silently or aloud to centre your mind and redirect your attention. Mantra has been used in Hinduism and Buddhism for meditation or spiritual practices for many years.



### Easy steps for using mantra technique for avoiding internal distractions



01

You have to select a word or phrase that resonates with you and helps you refocus, for example, could be obvious words like “listen” or “focus”.

02

When you notice an intrusive thought or distraction, immediately bring your mantra to mind. For example, if your mantra is “listen,” silently repeat it to yourself.

03

Continue to silently repeat your mantra as many times as necessary to refocus your attention. The repetition of the mantra can help drown out the intrusive thoughts and redirect your concentration to the speaker. While using your mantra to regain focus, make sure to maintain appropriate eye contact and receptive body language. This will show the speaker that you are engaged and actively listening.

04

**Practice this technique and it will be more effective.**

Another possibility to avoid internal distractions is to **take notes**. They can help you stay engaged and remember key points. If an intrusive thought or distraction enters your mind during the conversation, jot it down in your notes with a brief keyword or description. This acknowledges the distraction and allows you to revisit it later, enabling you to stay focused on the speaker and forget that intrusive thought in that moment.

Do not abuse this technique in a conversation with another person or that person could feel awkward that you are not properly listening, or you are analysing him/her.

## External distractions

Other barrier is **EXTERNAL DISTRACTIONS**. In our fast-paced and technology-driven world, it is common to be surrounded by numerous external stimuli. Whether it is the buzzing of a smartphone, the noise of traffic or a television, or a noisy environment, these distractions can make it challenging to focus on the speaker's message. As a result, active listening becomes compromised, and the speaker may feel ignored or undervalued. For that, preventing external distractions during active listening is important for maintaining focus on the speaker and the conversation.

- First measure is to select a quiet environment to reduce the chances of external noises and distractions interfering with your listening.
- If you have control over your environment, close doors to minimise noise from other areas.
- Silence or turn off notifications on your smartphone to prevent incoming messages or calls from diverting your attention.
- Turn off or mute the television if it is possible.
- Choose a good location with good lighting and close enough to ensure that your conversation partner is the primary focus.
- If it is needed, take a short break if there are important noisy distractions that prevent having a conversation.



## Emotional reactions

Following barriers, **EMOTIONAL REACTIONS** can be another one. Emotions can run high during conversations, and when we are emotionally charged, it becomes challenging to maintain a calm and receptive attitude. For example, if someone expresses an opinion that contradicts our own deeply held beliefs, we may become defensive or agitated. These emotional reactions can lead to heated arguments and a breakdown in effective communication.

### In those cases:

- Awareness is the first step in managing emotional reactions.
- When you feel an emotional reaction coming on, take a moment to pause before responding. Use that brief pause to collect your thoughts, process your emotions, and respond more rationally.
- Finally, focus on understanding the speaker's perspective and feelings. Try to put yourself in their shoes to gain a better appreciation of their point of view.

## Willingness to offer solutions or advice

**CULTURAL AND LANGUAGE DIFFERENCES** can create significant barriers to active listening. When individuals come from different cultural backgrounds or speak different languages engage in a conversation, there is a potential for miscommunication. Language barriers, nuances in non-verbal communication, and differing cultural norms can make it challenging to fully understand one another. Active listening can be hindered when there is a lack of cultural awareness and sensitivity.

### To solve it:

- Be aware that there may be differences in interpretation of certain non-verbal cues or word meanings.
- Learn about other customs, values, and communication styles.
- Do not hesitate to ask for clarification if you are unsure about some meanings.

## Cultural and language differences

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### To solve it:

- Be aware that there may be differences in interpretation of certain non-verbal cues or word meanings.
- Learn about other customs, values, and communication styles.
- Do not hesitate to ask for clarification if you are unsure about some meanings.

## Techniques for active listening

We are going to **analyse** some **verbal and non-verbal active listening techniques** that you could test in the next interaction:

### Verbal active listening techniques

#### → Paraphrase

Try to use your own words to express something that was said by another person. Putting it into your own words can clarify the message or make it more relevant. This will also allow the speaker to clarify vague information or expand their message.



#### Example

**Original Statement from the Speaker:** "I am really overwhelmed with my workload at the moment, and I feel like I cannot keep up with all the tasks."

**Paraphrased Response:** "It sounds like you are experiencing a lot of stress due to the heavy workload, and you are struggling to manage all your tasks effectively."

After this, practice and try to use paraphrase in the next conversation with some member of your family or with a friend.

**Original Statement from the Speaker:** "This project is crucial for us, so I need to contact the managers of several companies to get support in the next few days or the project will be given to our competitors."

## → Summarise

A summary is a brief overview of the last point, or of part or all of the conversation. This technique involves condensing what someone has said briefly, helping both people to understand each other better and allowing the speaker to clarify anything important.



### Example

**Original Statement from the Speaker:** "I have been feeling overwhelmed lately due to a combination of factors. My workload at the office has significantly increased with the new project, and I am struggling to manage my time effectively. Additionally, I have been juggling family responsibilities, taking care of my kids, and helping my parents with their health issues, which has added extra stress. I'm also dealing with a personal challenge, trying to get back in shape after a long period of inactivity. All of these things are taking a toll on my energy and well-being."

**Paraphrased Response:** "It seems like you are dealing with a multitude of challenges lately, including a heavier workload at work, family responsibilities, personal health goals, and various stressors, which are affecting your overall well-being and energy."

➔ **And now, is your turn, try to give a summarised response for the following statement.**

**Original Statement from the Speaker:** "I need to buy a variety of items for our upcoming family party of the next Friday. We are hosting a barbecue, so I need to pick up some burgers, hot dog buns, condiments, and grilling supplies. In addition, we will have vegetarian guests, so I should also get some veggie burger options, as well as buns and toppings. Lastly, we are planning to make a few different salads, so I will add lettuce, tomatoes, cucumbers, and dressing to the list."

After this, practice and try the summarise technique in the next conversation with a member of your family or with a friend.

## → Questions

Asking open-ended questions to seek clarification or further information can help uncover the speaker's intent or concerns. Also, you can ask direct questions to get more details or focus on specific parts of what has been said. With this technique, you are encouraging the speaker to share more, and clarify what has been said. Asking questions demonstrates active engagement in the conversation, showing that you are attentive and interested in what the speaker has to say. Avoid asking questions that lead to a specific answer, as they can block honest communication. Instead, use open questions to encourage the speaker to share their thoughts and feelings more fully

### Example



- Could you explain that in more detail? I want to make sure I understand your point.
- Could you provide an example to illustrate what you mean?
- That seems important, what ideas do you have for addressing that problem?

## → Use short verbal affirmations for encouraging the conversation

Use short verbal cues like “I see,” “Go on,” “I understand,” “Yes” or “Tell me more,” which show your interest and keep the conversation flowing. These statements can create a positive atmosphere for the speaker, demonstrating your active involvement and ability to absorb the information they are sharing.

- Use short verbal cues like “I see,” “Go on,” “I understand”, “Yes” or “Tell me more”.
- Employ concise verbal affirmations.

## → Empathetic Responses

Expressing empathy through words like “I understand how you feel” or “That must have been challenging” conveys emotional support and encourages the speaker to open up. Also, it is important to show that you appreciate the confidence of the other person if the speaker is explaining a sensitive topic with sentences like “Thank you for trusting me with this. It means a lot to me”, “Thanks for the confidence”.

- Use words like *“I understand how you feel”*.
- Use words like *“That must have been challenging”*.
- Use sentences like *“Thank you for trusting me with this. It means a lot to me”, “Thanks for the confidence”*.

## Non-verbal active listening techniques

### → Maintaining Eye Contact

It involves looking directly into the eyes of the person you are communicating with and holding that gaze for a reasonable duration. It can indicate interest, attentiveness, confidence, or discomfort.

Maintaining eye contact during a conversation is usually seen as a way of showing that you are listening and that you are engaged, creating a sense of connection. However, too much eye contact can be intimidating. It is also crucial to take cultural norms into account, as prolonged eye contact can be seen as confrontational in some cultures. In addition, it is important to recognise that certain disorders can affect a person’s ability to maintain eye contact, which can reflect challenges in social interactions. For example, Autism Spectrum Disorder often leads to difficulties in maintaining eye contact due to impairments in social communication. Individuals may find eye contact overwhelming or have difficulty understanding the social signals conveyed through gaze

This information is complementary to the information of the unit about **Communication**



## → Body Language

An open and receptive posture, which may involve nodding, leaning forward, uncrossing arms, and assuming an inviting stance, shows that we are engaged and we are encouraging communication.

This involves the use of physical cues, such as posture, gestures, and movements, to convey information. Body language serves to reinforce engagement, attentiveness, and empathy.



### Example

- Leaning slightly forward while sitting or standing signifies attentiveness and interest in what the speaker is saying. An upright and open posture communicates confidence and receptivity. Conversely, slouching or appearing disinterested can be distracting and give the impression of disengagement.
- **Palms Facing Upwards:** The orientation of your palms is another body language cue. Palms facing upwards can indicate openness, receptivity, and a willingness to listen. It is a non-threatening gesture that can make the speaker feel more comfortable. When you use this gesture, it conveys that you are there to receive the speaker's message without judgment.
- **Crossing arms:** It may indicate that the person is feeling threatened, uncomfortable, or protective. In this context, it can signal a desire to create a physical barrier or shield. Also, it could be a sign of disagreement or disapproval. In other cases, could be a sign of impatience or frustration or even, in some cases, could be not a bad signal because simply is a comfortable and habitual posture for some people.
- **Nodding:** is a common non-verbal gesture that involves moving the head up and down in a repetitive manner, typically to signify agreement, understanding, or acknowledgment

## → Facial Expressions

They involve the use of various movements and configurations of the facial muscles to pass a wide range of emotions, feelings, and attitudes. Facial expressions are an integral part of human interaction and play a significant role in conveying meaning and connecting with others. Some facial expressions are considered universal, meaning that they are recognised and understood across cultures. These include expressions of happiness, sadness, anger, fear, surprise, and disgust. For example, a smile is generally associated with happiness, while a furrowed brow and downturned mouth are commonly linked to sadness. There are other facial expressions with cultural or context variations.



## → Gestures

Hand and arm movements can be used to emphasise or clarify points and show agreement, understanding, or encouragement. For instance, giving a thumbs-up, or using hand gestures to highlight key points can show that you are actively engaged in the conversation. As you probably know, there are sign languages used by deaf people to communicate with one another, in that case is mainly using gestures with a specific meaning to communicate; and is a clear example how gestures or signs could communicate a message.

## → Mirroring

Is a technique in which you subtly mimic the body language and gestures of the speaker. This can create a sense of rapport and connection, making the speaker feel more at ease. However, it should be done subtly to avoid appearing artificial.

## Reflection exercise

You have been working in a balloon manufacturing company for 15 years, and 1 year ago, a person who has big cultural and linguistic differences with you has joined you. Until today you have not had any problems because you worked in different departments, but your boss has just told you that he is being transferred to your department and that it is very important that you listen to his ideas and then implement them.

Tomorrow, you have a meeting with him. What possible communication barriers may arise and how will you overcome them?  
 What **verbal** and **non-verbal** techniques can you use to improve your understanding of his message?



## Summary

**Active listening** is a **fundamental communication skill** that involves fully engaging with a speaker, not only by hearing their words but also by understanding their emotions and perspective. However, several barriers can hinder active listening, including internal distractions like preoccupied thoughts, external distractions like noisy environments or technological interruptions, emotional reactions that can lead to defensiveness or arguments or cultural and language differences that cause misunderstandings.

To be an **effective active listener**, it is essential to employ both **verbal** and **non-verbal techniques**. Verbal techniques include paraphrasing or restating the speaker's message in your own words to confirm understanding, summarising the key points, asking open-ended questions to seek clarification or further information, and providing empathetic affirmations to show support and understanding. Non-verbal techniques involve maintaining eye contact, utilising body language like nodding to indicate agreement, using appropriate facial expressions or gestures or even the technique of mirroring.



# Unit 04

## Teamwork

## Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module, participants shall be able to:



**Define** the concept of teamwork and its benefits

**Identify** the better skills to improve teamwork

**Recognize** strategies that promote a better teamwork environment

## Content

**Teamwork**

**Strategies** to promote a better teamwork environment

**Benefits** of teamwork

**Skills** to improve teamwork

## Introduction

Teamwork is not just a group of people doing something. Teamwork happens when people work together towards a common goal. This is one of the most desirable skills an employer seeks. Factors like personalities, goals and skill sets impact how well you can work as a team.

Teamwork can be found in all aspects of life, including work and even in family being able to work as a team will make you grow as a person, and you might discover a new side of yourself.

## The importance of the ability to adjust to changes in the company's structure and business needs

Have you ever been part of a team where each member brings their unique knowledge and skills to create something greater together?

**That is teamwork in action!**



**Teamwork** is a collaborative journey where team members work together to achieve common organisational goals. Teamwork allows to achieve tangible outcomes and increases team effectiveness and satisfaction [1]. Teamwork is a central feature of successful organisations and definitely improves the well-being and health of the employees.

Teamwork is the combination of diverse tasks carried out by a group of individuals to reach a specific goal. This collaborative work demands a range of contributions and skills from each member, encompassing commitment, respect, empathy, creativity, and problem-solving abilities[2].

In a team, the role of a leader, whether naturally emerging or appointed, takes centre stage. This individual is responsible for uniting ideas, orchestrating activities, and guiding everyone toward a shared objective. How have you seen these aspects play out in teams you have been a part of or observed[2]?

**Would you like to know more about leadership?**

→ The **PRIORITY45** virtual course has a unit dedicated to it!





Have you ever thought about what makes teamwork so remarkable?

**Here are some key aspects**

### — Clear objectives

- Give purpose and guide people in their specific tasks.
- Clear and known by all.

### — Shared identity

- A common set of values creates a strong sense of unity.

### — Diversity

- Having a mix of backgrounds brings in fresh perspectives and boosts creativity.

### — Strategic Planning

- A well-thought-out plan ensures everyone is on track.

### — Motivation

- It is the engine that keeps the team on track in its daily activities and drives it to reach its goals.



## Benefits of teamwork

In today's society, working as a team is essential for success. Most of the workplaces nowadays values collaboration, so understanding the benefits of working together is crucial for personal and professional growth.



**Let's check some of the benefits of teamwork and its impact** in an effective collaboration that make individuals, organisations and projects more efficient and happier[3].

### Problem solving

Being on a team makes problem solving easier, different people means different ways of thinking, experiences and different perspectives, which can help generate more solutions. A number of people is usually more effective in finding solutions than one person. If you work alone, you will have limited solutions, however working as a team you will be capable to have different kind of solutions to the same problem.

PRIORITY45 has a unit dedicated to **Problem-solving skills**, check it out in **Module 4!**



### Increased productivity

If you contribute to make your team produce results, you will feel valued, supported and committed to each other. Being praised and respected by a team member might make you work harder and more productive.

### Creativity expanded

Creativity can be sparked with teamwork. Since people have different perspectives, you will end up having more ideas. If you want to brainstorm as a team, you will end up sharing your knowledge, giving constructive feedback and this can help you polish ideas or innovate outcomes. Utilising all these different resources of a team more ideas will be generated.

**Creativity** is a skill that can be developed!

Check more about it on **Module 4** of PRIORITY45 virtual course!

### Enhanced personal growth

This might seem contradictory because teamwork involves working for the same goal, most goals require individual contributions, just by sharing or hearing someone feedback will help you gain more knowledge. Interacting with your peers will give you opportunity to learn skills they shared. Teamwork will also help you develop soft skills, such as being a better listener, being a better communicator and being more versatile.



### Increased motivation

Teamwork can help you feel more motivated. Belonging to a team and receiving appreciation from others from qualities you bring to the table will help you stick to your goal. You might feel inspired to work more if you see your team also putting hard work in.



### Less burnout

Team member can provide emotional support to each other because most of the times they understand the stress of completing work. Since the workload is shared this can prevent from you feeling overwhelmed by a lot of work. Having a good team environment will also make you less stress ending in less burnout chances. A lot of people rather work on a team instead of working alone, making work fun will help you long term. .

### Promotes diversity

A team will have different education background, sometimes different ethnicities. You will need to embrace these different ideals; sometimes, people will disagree but that is fine: encouraging healthy discussions will help the team get better results. This will also promote a culture that values everyone and respects the others feedback.



## Disadvantages of teamwork

But teamwork is not all roses. It can often have disadvantages. Knowing and being aware of them is half the battle to avoid them and to implement measures to reduce their impact [3].

### Unequal participation

When accountability is split between everyone, some people might feel they can sit back and let others do a lot of work, hoping that the rest of the group will compensate for their lack of work. Sometimes you will see others not putting the same level of effort and that can slow you down.

### Personality issues

Personality clashes can make things tense and uncomfortable. This can happen due to communication issues, different perspectives or simply by having team member competing in an unhealthy way. This can lead to conflict and even lack of trust.



### Responsibility

When something goes wrong, people in the team can blame each other which can lead to resentment. Not everyone has the same sense of ownership, some might work to escape blame and you can end up taking responsibility for someone else's mistake.

## It can take longer

Some team members might be busier than others, they can work slower than others or they need more guidance in their work. When you work alone, you do not need to lose time on these things. Being in a group can generate distractions and end up in conversations non work related, that can lead to missed deadlines.

Overall, the **benefits of team working** outweigh the disadvantages when well-managed. If teams can work together effectively, great things can be achieved. Following, you will find some ideas that can improve your teamwork results and interactions.

## Skills to improve teamwork

**We are about to explore some teamwork skills.**

Have you ever wondered how communication can boost collaboration? Do you have any hunches about how to deal with conflicts with other team members?

Think about your own experiences - what skills do you think would make teamwork easier?



### Communication

This is the foundation of good teamwork, it is important to talk openly and honestly with the group members about expectations, deadlines and responsibilities. Effective communication also helps share your ideas and thoughts, so everyone understands you. Having a good communication will promote trust and a positive team environment. Team members will have disagreements but being respectful in your communication will help resolve the issues quicker [4].

## Time management

In a team this is important because you need to meet deadlines. Each individual needs to know how to manage their time because this impacts directly on objectives of the team. Sometimes a team member work may rely on yours. Time management helps you being more productive and efficient and helps to achieve a healthier work-life.

## Problem resolution

This involves using critical thinking or being creative to deal with challenges and work towards your team goals. You need to be able to think outside the box rather than just focus on the negative's outcomes, you need to stay calm, analyse the situation and act towards a solution.

## Collaboration

In a team you need to be willing to help, sometimes a team member or even you will need help; sharing your ideas and perspectives can help. Showing you are a good collaborator helps to build trust between team members. Collaboration makes easier to work hard, work through adversities and even makes the team members more capable because then they can learn from someone else.

## Develop a team mentality

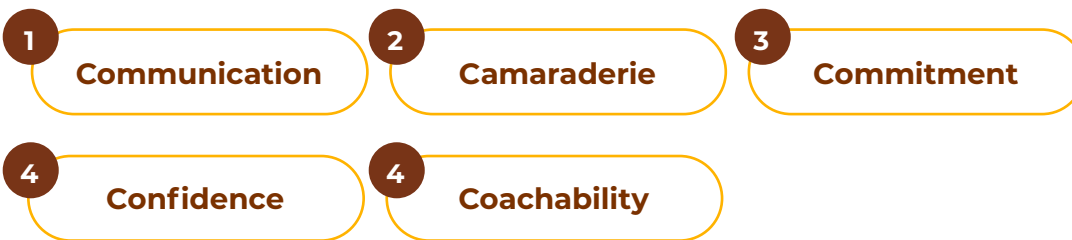
All members are crucial for a team success, having a team mentality starts with you understanding your role. You need to focus on the bigger picture and how you can contribute the best way to a team or how you can help your team perform better.

## Celebrate your team success

Sending congratulations or good work acknowledgment to your teams through a message can have a big impact and can inspire others to do the same. Celebrating wins builds a positive environment in the team and can create a good team spirit.

## Strategies to promote a better teamwork environment

Regardless of the business model, the success of any team depends on adopting the **5 fundamental 'C's**. These elements are crucial building blocks for creating a winning team [5], [6].



### 1 Communication

Teamwork is easier when everyone is on the same **communication** wavelength. Make sure everyone knows what is up and are familiar with the team's goals. Talk about it, listen up, and share thoughts – that is the key. Make questions and invite others to do the same, get the details, and throw in ideas. Good vibes in communication mean fewer mix-ups, less drama, and way better decision-making. Let's keep the talk flowing!

### 2 Camaraderie

Ever felt that awesome vibe with your team, where you are more like friends than co-workers? That is **camaraderie**, and it is a game-changer. Teams with strong camaraderie are more productive and united and get everything on track more easily. Doing fun stuff together, whether it is team games or just hanging out, builds this camaraderie. When your team has that connection, you naturally work together better, have each other's backs, and actually enjoy the job.



## 3

**Commitment**

**Commitment** is like the secret ingredient that makes a team unstoppable. It is all about how much passion and effort each team member brings to the table to achieve a shared goal. Commitment means everyone aims to reach those team objectives. When a team is committed, they work together seamlessly toward a common vision, conquering challenges along the way.

## 4

**Confidence**

**Confidence** is having faith in both oneself and the team's capability to reach the goals. When a team has high confidence levels, they are more inclined to take bold steps and be innovative. Building confidence comes from setting doable goals, cheering on victories, and picking up lessons from the misses. It is about encouraging team members to take calculated risks, get creative, and explore outside the usual lanes. A confident team tackles challenges head-on and is not shy about raising their hands when they need some backup.

## 5

**Coachability**

**Coachability** involves a team's readiness to learn, adapt, and grow. Regardless of experience, there's always room for learning from others and broader support. A team needs to embrace feedback, be open to new approaches, and actively seek opportunities to enhance their skills. Encouraging team members to seek feedback, learn from mistakes, and share best practices contributes to a coachable team. Such a team is more likely to be adaptable, innovative, and high-performing.



## Case study

### Unity in Service

Dealing with Teamwork Challenges in a Third Sector Organisation

Dealing with Teamwork Challenges in a Third Sector Organisation  
 Challenges Faced: In the pursuit of our goals, Team Harmony encountered challenges common to third-sector organisations: limited resources, diverse stakeholder expectations, and the need for a flexible yet impactful approach. Balancing the aspirations of team members with the practical constraints of the organisation is a unique challenge.

### Team Dynamics

Recognizing the importance of collaboration in their mission, Team Unity started to do regular meetings, integrated inclusive decision-making processes, and fostered a culture of shared responsibility. So how can the channel individual passion into a cohesive force?

### Solutions

Given the multifaceted challenges, Team Unity implemented a strategic plan that emphasized collaboration with external stakeholders, including community members, volunteers, and partner organisations. Leveraging each member's expertise, they designed programs that maximized impact while aligning with the organisation's resources.

To respond to the community's constantly evolving needs, continuous innovation was required. Team Unity encouraged a culture of adaptability and creativity: all team members felt empowered to propose and implement new solutions. This flexibility proved crucial in responding to unforeseen challenges.



## Results and Impact

The concerted efforts of Team Unity yielded measurable results, with community programs achieving their intended outcomes. Not only did they witness positive changes within the community, but the team also experienced a strengthened sense of purpose and cohesion.

## Lessons Learned

Team Unity learned that in the third sector, where the focus is on community welfare, collaboration is not just beneficial—it is imperative. Balancing passion with practicality, fostering a culture of adaptability, and engaging with stakeholders collaboratively emerged as key lessons.

The case study of **Team Unity at Community Care Initiatives** underscores the role of effective teamwork in a third-sector organisation.

**By embracing collaboration**, acknowledging challenges, and fostering an innovative spirit, Team Unity overcame hurdles and made a lasting impact on the community.

## Summary

In this unit, integrated into the “Growing with Others” module, the participants could reflect on the benefits of effective teamwork, recognizing its importance for increasing productivity and shared success. The unit also focused on strategies that promote a positive teamwork environment, emphasizing open communication and mutual support. The integration of this unit in the “Growing with Others” module, recognizes the importance of this skill for personal and professional development.

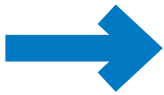


# U n i t 0 5

## Cooperation

## Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module, participants shall be able to:



**Understand** the importance of cooperation and its benefits in the workplace.

**Identify** strategies to improve cooperation and common effort.

**Recognize** relevant strategies that can improve this skill in the workplace.

## Content

**Importance** of cooperation

**Strategies** to improve cooperation.

**Benefits** of cooperation in the workplace environment

## Introduction

Cooperation in the working environment goes beyond the mere coincidence of tasks; it implies a genuine willingness to cooperate and work together with others. In this context, being part of a cohesive and committed collective makes the difference against individualistic competition and rivalry. To achieve a successful collaboration, the intention must be sincere and genuine.

In the workplace, cooperation is a fundamental pillar for the proper performance of an organisation. When employees work together, a positive and productive work environment is created, conducive to knowledge sharing, resource optimisation and strengthening of individual skills. This scenario translates directly into greater efficiency and quality of the results obtained.

## Importance of cooperation

**Cooperation** in the workplace is a fundamental element for the success and efficiency of any organisation or company. It refers to working together towards a common goal, sharing resources, skills, values and knowledge to achieve positive results.

Effective cooperation can have a significant impact on the overall performance of a company and the welfare of employees.



**Let's put ourselves in some scenarios where cooperation plays a key role**

### — Functional Departments

Imagine you are in the marketing department and working closely with the sales and production teams. Efficient cooperation among these departments could mean coordinating marketing campaigns that align with the production schedule, ensuring that the right products are promoted at the right time to maximise sales and meet customer demand effectively.

### — Project Teams

Now you are part of a project team developing a new software product. Collaborating effectively with your team members means taking advantage of each person's expertise—like the programmers, UI/UX designers, and testers—to create a user-friendly and bug-free application that meets the project's goals within the specified timeframe.

### — Human Resources Department

If you are involved in Human Resources, your cooperation in personnel planning might involve working with hiring managers to identify the skills needed for a particular job role. This collaboration ensures that the recruitment process targets individuals whose qualifications and experience align with the company's needs, fostering a motivated and skilled workforce.

### — Development and Design

Consider a scenario where you are part of the development team collaborating with the design team in a product-focused company. By working together seamlessly, the developers and designers can ensure that the final product not only functions flawlessly but also has an aesthetically pleasing design, enhancing its market appeal.

### — Sales and Customer Service

In this case, you are in the sales department cooperating closely with customer service. Effective cooperation here might involve sharing customer feedback with the sales team to better understand client preferences, leading to more tailored product offerings and improved customer satisfaction.

These areas are just a few examples of where **cooperation plays a fundamental role** in building a strong organisational culture and achieving long-term success.



## Benefits of cooperation in the workplace environment

In today's world of work, **cooperation** and teamwork have become fundamental elements for the growth and development of any company. The ability to cooperate efficiently with other co-workers has become a skill highly valued by employers, as it allows achieving goals more effectively and fosters a positive work environment.

Therefore, cooperation in the working environment entails several benefits that contribute to the success and well-being of both individuals and the organisation as a whole.



Some of these benefits are

### — Encourages Teamwork

When you cooperate positively, you foster collaboration among individuals, leading to the development of **strong and efficient teams**. In your work environment, cooperative teams are more likely to achieve shared goals and objectives.

### — Improves the Working Environment

Cooperation nurtures a positive and collaborative work atmosphere, making it more pleasant. When you and your colleagues support each other, it creates a **sense of camaraderie, enhancing satisfaction and motivation**.

Imagine having to work in a team on a challenging project. By openly sharing ideas, offering mutual support, and recognising each other's contributions, the team creates a positive work environment that fosters enthusiasm, making the project enjoyable and rewarding for everyone involved.

### — Improves Problem-Solving

Cooperation brings out the best of **diverse skills, knowledge, and perspectives within your team**. This diversity helps in tackling complex problems from various angles, making problem-solving easier.

Consider a scenario where a diverse team works on a problem. A software development team comprising coders, designers, and user experience experts positively collaborate to address a complex technical issue from multiple angles, resulting in an innovative solution that improves the product's functionality and user experience.

In **PRIORITY45** course, you can learn more about **Problem-solving skills**. Check it in **Module 4!**

### — Fosters a Sense of Belonging

Cooperation creates a sense of belonging and connection among team members. Feeling part of a group working towards common goals **increases both job satisfaction and personal loyalty to the company**.

Picture working closely with a team on a long-term project. Through continuous cooperation, celebrating milestones together, and supporting one another during challenging times, it is clear that you and your team may develop a strong bond, fostering a sense of belonging and mutual commitment to achieving shared objectives.

### — Strengthens Interpersonal Relationships

Cooperation leads to positive and healthy relationships among people. Building these connections enhances morale, job satisfaction, and employee retention within your workplace.

By sharing best practices with your colleagues, offering assistance, and communicating effectively, your team builds **strong relationships** that positively impact morale and job satisfaction.

### — Strengthens Interpersonal Relationships

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By sharing best practices with your colleagues, offering assistance, and communicating effectively, your team builds **strong relationships** that positively impact morale and job satisfaction.



### — Boosts Innovation

Collaboration and idea exchange among individuals with different experiences and perspectives **encourage innovative solutions**. Cooperation fosters an environment conducive to creativity and fresh ideas.

Imagine a brainstorming session where diverse team members contribute ideas freely. Through cooperative exchanges, combining different perspectives, and encouraging unconventional thinking, your team generates ground-breaking ideas that lead to innovative product features or process improvements.

### — Increases Efficiency and Productivity

Working together cooperatively leads to greater efficiency and productivity. When you get to effectively cooperate, tasks are better distributed, resulting in **faster and more efficient results** based on individual strengths.

### — Develops Social Skills

Cooperation provides opportunities for developing social skills like **empathy, effective communication and negotiation**—valuable both in your social life and the workplace.

Consider participating in team-building activities organised by your company. Through cooperative exercises that emphasise effective communication and problem-solving, you and your colleagues develop stronger social skills that enhance collaboration in the workplace.

### — Develops Social Skills

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### — Reduces Stress

Imagine working in a highly cooperative team where the workload is shared equally. By supporting each other, sharing responsibilities, and helping when needed, the team softens individual stress levels, enabling everyone to handle challenges more effectively while maintaining a **healthy work-life balance**.

In this section, we have seen that cooperation in the workplace not only contributes to the achievement of organisational objectives but also plays a crucial role in the development of professional and personal skills of workers. A cooperative working environment creates a culture that values the contribution of each individual, fostering sustainable personal and professional growth.

We hope these sections have helped you to clearly understand the importance and benefits of good cooperation among team members.

**Let's now see some strategies to improve this skill and make the most of it!**

## Strategies to improve cooperation

**Improving cooperation** is a valuable goal at both personal and professional levels, and its improvement involves several aspects and skills to be considered.

Here are some strategies that might help you achieve this

### — Clear communication

Ensure that the information is transmitted in a clear and understandable manner. Listen actively to understand the needs and expectations of others. Try not to take anything for granted and do not be afraid to ask if you need to! .

Want to know more about **Communication?**

**PRIORITY45** virtual course has a unit about this topic.

### — Develop social skills

Strengthen your skills to relate to others, including empathy, patience and the ability to work as a team. These skills will facilitate more effective cooperation.

Want to know more about **Social Skills?**

**PRIORITY45** virtual course has a unit about this topic.

### — Confidence-building

Trust is essential for successful cooperation. Keep your commitments, be honest and open, and show confidence in other team members. In this way, they will also show confidence in your work and capacities.



### — Resolve conflicts constructively

Disagreements are inevitable and normal when working with different ideas and personalities. However, for good cooperation, it is crucial to address them positively, seeking solutions rather than blaming or criticising, and work towards mutual understanding to find an agreement.

### — Recognise and celebrate success

Valuing and recognising the individual achievements and/or your team's can have a positive impact on a good cooperation environment. This not only strengthens morals, but also the sense of belonging, trust and mutual collaboration.

Would you like to know more about **Adapting to Change?**

**PRIORITY45** virtual course has a unit about this topic.

### — Being flexible

Being willing to adapt to changes in plan or approach when needed allows you to better manage ambiguity and work efficiently in unstructured environments.

## — Commitment and responsibility

Fulfil your commitments and promote a culture of responsibility in the team. By showing active cooperation and commitment to the team, it allows the tasks to flow more efficiently and achieve better results. Actively participate in assigned tasks and take responsibility for results.

Would you like to know more about now Learn to Learn?

PRIORITY45 virtual course has a unit about this topic.

## — Learn from feedback

Be open to constructive feedback and use it to improve your own contribution to the team. Growing with others and life-long learning are key points to good cooperation, as well as continuous development and improvement.



## — Personal development

Look for opportunities to improve your skills and knowledge. Share your learning with the team and motivate others to do the same. Take every opportunity to learn and grow!

## — Inclusion

Foster inclusion and respect values inside the team. Embrace diversity of personalities and abilities to empower a good cooperation and heterogeneous team.

**Improving cooperation** takes time and effort, but these principles can help you build strong relationships and work more effectively with others, and create a positive interaction environment among individuals.

## Summary

This unit highlights the **importance of cooperation** in the personal and working environment, identifying strategies to improve it and highlighting its benefits. The participant is expected to develop skills to work efficiently as a team and contribute to common goals.

It details key reasons for valuing cooperation, such as fostering teamwork, improving problem-solving, strengthening interpersonal relationships, boosting innovation, increasing efficiency and productivity, reducing stress, fostering a sense of belonging, improving decision-making, and establishing positive working relationships. It provides suggestions for improving cooperation, such as clear communication, development of social skills, confidence-building, constructive conflict resolution, recognition of success, flexibility, commitment and responsibility, continuous learning, and personal development.



U n i t 0 6  
**Interaction  
with others**

## Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module, participants shall be able to:



**Understand** the importance of good and proper communication with others.

**Identify** strategies and good practices that can improve proper behaviour with others, understanding and respecting boundaries.

**Recognize** rules of respect and tolerance in the workplace and other contexts.

## Content

**The basis of** interaction

**Benefits** of a good and positive interaction with others

How to **respect** and **establish** healthy boundaries

**Rules** of respect and tolerance

## Introduction

In today's labour market, having good skills when interacting with others is an additional value for companies that are looking for new professionals to introduce in their team. These skills are not only relevant in the workplace, but are also fundamental in situations such as negotiations, public relations, daily interactions with clients, colleagues or meetings.

Good interaction among team members ensures effective communication, timely sharing of updates, and collaborative problem-solving. This positive interaction contributes to the project's success and strengthens team cohesion. On the other hand, interacting positively with others in your daily life has benefits in mental well-being, as well as personal growth. In this context, this unit addresses the prevailing need to develop effective skills in social and professional interaction.



## The basis of Interaction

**Interacting** with others is a complex and multifaceted process that is influenced by various factors. So, what are the pillars of interaction?

The basis of interaction in work and personal relations is based on fundamental elements that contribute to the harmonious and efficient functioning of a working environment. These elements include:



### Communication

Communication is fundamental in all social interaction, since it is the mechanism that regulates and that, after all, makes possible the interaction between people.

#### — Why is it important to communicate with others?

Good communication with others can lead you to positive interactions with others, as it facilitates coordination and fluidity in human relations.

#### — What is the role of communication when you interact with others in the workplace?

Communication in the workplace is essential for organisational efficiency and harmony. It goes beyond data transmission, encompassing verbal and written channels. Your clear expression strengthens team cohesion. It also involves oneself emotional and social aspects, highlighting the importance of empathy and active listening.

## Respect

### — What exactly is respect when interacting with others?

Respect is one of the most important moral values of the human being, it is the basis for healthy social interaction. Respect does not mean agreeing with another person, but it is about not discriminating or offending that person because of their way of life, their thoughts or their decisions, and searching for ways of mutual agreement.

### — How does respect impact a good work environment?

Respect in the work environment is crucial for helping you build strong relationships and promoting productivity. Recognising and valuing the skills, opinions and experiences of who is around you enriches diversity, stimulating creativity and innovation.

A respectful environment eliminates workplace harassment and fosters inclusion. Respect not only implies rules, but an organisational attitude and culture that creates an environment that leads to collective growth and success.

## Collaboration

### — What benefits does good collaboration bring when interacting with others?

In a good collaboration among people, you can experience collaborative learning, enabling you to learn in a fun and effective manner. It also assists you in developing skills like communication and problem-solving, which you can apply in various contexts, such as the work environment.

### — How does collaboration improve my good interaction at work?

Collaboration and good interaction at work are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. A collaborative and interactive work environment can help you attain higher engagement and satisfaction inside your workplace. It can be crucial to ensure good cooperation with your coworkers and is helpful in the creation of a solid team.

## Empathy

### — What is the importance of empathy in human interactions?

Empathy is important because it helps us understand how others feel so we can respond appropriately to the situation. Thanks to empathy we can create comfortable and simple interpersonal relationships, and being respectful with others.

### — How can empathy benefit your interactions in the work environment?

Empathy can help you better understand the perspectives and feelings of your fellow colleagues. This understanding facilitates more effective and nuanced communication. It conveys a sense of validation and inclusion by recognising and respecting the diverse experiences and backgrounds of team members and has a positive impact on conflict management.

## Conflict Management



### — Why is a good conflict resolution strategy useful in the interaction with others?

A positive conflict management can help people understand each other empathetically and assertively, to improve the coexistence with others, to apply active listening or to learn to control the emotions that lead to anger, which is important for a good human interaction.

### — How does this improve your interactions in the workplace?

In today's work context, conflict management unfolds almost as a form of artistic expression. By fostering mutual understanding through respectful dialogue, the road to durable solutions is paved. Avoiding damaging confrontations and finding common ground not only promotes harmony but also strengthens working relationships. Patience is crucial in this process, helping you to build bridges to a deeper understanding. Conflict resolution, rather than a goal in itself, becomes the foundation for healthy working relationships and resilient teams.

## Positive environment



### — How do my interactions with others have an impact on the environment?

Positive social interactions have a wide range of both physical and mental benefits that have a direct impact on the personal, social or work environment, including good mental health, communication skills, and improved physical health, among others.

### — How can I help to achieve a positive environment at work?

To cultivate a positive work climate, open communication and mutual respect must be prioritised, fostering an inclusive environment, where each member feels valued. It is important to recognise achievements and encourage collaboration, stimulating a sense of belonging.

By maintaining a positive attitude and encouraging creativity, you can inspire your colleagues to express their ideas. All these aspects, together with the general contents of the Units that form this course, can help in the creation of a positive social and work environment, which is one of the main goals of the PRIORITY 45 project!

## Adaptability

### — How does adaptation work in social interactions?

Adaptation is, in sociology and psychology, the process by which a group or an individual modifies its behaviour patterns to conform to the prevailing norms in the social environment in which it moves [7].

### — What benefits do adaptability in work interactions have?

Adaptability in the workplace is the ability to respond effectively to different scenarios and challenges in the workplace. Adaptability can help you connect with others, normalising the importance of quality relationships at work and providing the skill set to strengthen them, especially in virtual environments. These foundations provide a solid framework for effective workplace interaction. By incorporating these practices into your daily life, you will contribute not only to the organisation's success, but also to your own personal success!

## Benefits of a good and positive interaction with others

The importance of good and positive interaction with others in the business environment cannot be underestimated, as it has several benefits that contribute to the overall well-being of the company and the individual success of its members. This interaction is not simply limited to social relations but extends to effective collaboration and the creation of an enabling work environment. Although we have already briefly advanced some benefits in the previous section, let's see in more detail the most important benefits that improve interaction with others at work.



**What are the benefits of a good and positive interaction with others?**

### — Healthier and more pleasant work environment

When employees feel comfortable and appreciated in their working environment, their satisfaction increases, which has a direct impact on **productivity and employee retention**. A team that gets along well and supports each other tends to be more engaged and motivated to achieve organisational goals.

### — Fosters effective communication

In an environment where you can feel free to express ideas and opinions without fear of judgement or unfavourable criticism, **innovation and creative problem-solving are promoted**. Open collaboration and transparent communication are essential for the efficient flow of information, resulting in more informed decision-making and the implementation of more effective strategies.



## — Builds strong and lasting relationships

These relationships are not only limited to the professional sphere, but can extend to your personal sphere, creating deeper ties between colleagues. These connections can translate into **support networks** that are beneficial for both professional growth and the emotional well-being of the individuals involved.

## Rules of Respect and Tolerance

To maintain a productive and harmonious workplace environment, rules of respect and tolerance are fundamental. These standards are essential to foster collaboration, respect, emotional well-being and efficient employee performance.

First, respect in the working environment implies recognising and valuing the skills, opinions and contributions of all colleagues. Diversity in the workplace is a reality, and **respect for cultural, gender, age and experience differences** is essential.

**Tolerance**, on the other hand, implies the ability to accept and manage differences of opinion constructively. In a working environment, divergences in working methods, strategies and approaches are inevitable. Tolerance implies being aware that these differences can also be beneficial, as they bring diverse perspectives that enrich decision-making and problem-solving.



### Here are some ways to practise tolerance:

- Practice respect and kindness to others.
- Words matter.
- Consider the language you use carefully.
- Avoid stereotypes and respect individuality.
- Be careful about potentially hurtful jokes.
- Be inclusive - celebrate diversity.
- Focus on commonalities rather than differences.
- Stand up for others if they are being treated unfairly or unkindly.

Clear rules on language and respectful behaviour are crucial. Offensive comments, discrimination, harassment or any form of disrespectful behaviour should be strictly eradicated.

**Company policies** should emphasise the importance of **equal and dignified treatment** for all employees, regardless of their hierarchical position or function in the organisation.

Empathy also plays a vital role in creating a tolerant environment. Understanding each other's experiences and perspectives can help you forge strong relationships and resolve conflicts more effectively. Fostering open communication and constructive feedback promotes an environment where all the team feels comfortable expressing their ideas and concerns.

Furthermore, it is essential that leaders play an exemplary role in promoting tolerance and respect. Their behaviour sets the tone for the rest of the team, so they should be **role models** in terms of respectful treatment, active listening and appreciation for diversity. Appreciation for diversity is also very important for oneself, as being open to diversity can help you explore new and different ideas and perspectives in a process of self-growth and cultural enrichment.





## How to respect and establish healthy boundaries

### How to say no?

#### What does it mean to have healthy boundaries?

Establishing healthy boundaries is essential to establish mutual respect. By drawing clear lines, open communication is encouraged and the autonomy of each individual is preserved. It is an act of **caring for oneself** and the other, recognizing the importance of maintaining emotional integrity. By respecting these limits, you can build a solid foundation for balanced and lasting relationships, where each person can grow and prosper in an environment of respect and mutual understanding. This subject is essential not just for fostering a positive work atmosphere but also for enhancing various aspects of one's personal life. Setting clear and effective boundaries is a way of respecting and valuing yourself and helps with defining your personal spaces, both physical and emotional.

### How can I establish them?

**Establishing and respecting** healthy boundaries in the work environment is fundamental to maintaining a productive, harmonious and beneficial work environment for the mental and emotional health of all team. Lack of limits may lead to several problems, such as exhaustion, lack of concentration and reduced work performance. It is therefore essential to understand how to set and respect effective limits on the job.

#### Here are some ways how you can establish healthy boundaries:

##### — Setting clear time limits

Set clear working hours and stick to them. This is much more relevant in today's world where technology allows you to be connected at any time, it is crucial to set digital boundaries, such as disconnecting email outside of work to ensure a better work-life balance.

### — Say “no” assertively

Setting limits involves being aware of one’s abilities and learning to politely reject requests that exceed those limits. Communicating existing priorities and responsibilities, clearly and respectfully, can help you to avoid the accumulation of tasks beyond your capacity.

### — Stress management

Is another key element when setting your healthy limits. In a demanding work environment, it is essential to recognise signs of exhaustion and take steps to address them. This may include regular practice of relaxation techniques, promotion of short breaks during the working day and implementation of policies that promote work-life balance.

**In addition**, it is essential to foster an organisational culture that promotes open communication and mutual respect. Leaders and colleagues should be aware of the limits of each individual and work together to ensure a healthy work environment. This means not pressuring employees to work outside their designated hours, respecting personal spaces and recognising the need for regular breaks.





U n i t 0 7  
**Emotional  
Intelligence**

## Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module, participants shall be able to:



**Define** emotional intelligence.

**Understand** the importance of recognising and managing own emotions and those of others.

**Identify** strategies related to the development of emotional intelligence.

## Content

The **definition** of emotional intelligence

**Benefits** of improving emotional intelligence in workplace environments

**Strategies** to improve emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence on a **lifelong approach**

## Introduction

Emotional Intelligence is the ability to recognise, understand and manage our own emotions, as well as the ability to perceive and manage the emotions of others. This concept, popularised by Daniel Goleman, encompasses competencies such as empathy, self-regulation and social skills.

The significance of emotional intelligence rests in its direct impact on your personal well-being, relationships, and professional trajectory. When you possess a high level of emotional intelligence, you tend to take decisions more effectively, communicate with greater clarity, and foster healthier connections. In the professional sphere, emotional intelligence has become indispensable for effective leadership and teamwork, underscoring its importance in holistic human development.

## The definition of Emotional Intelligence

**Emotional intelligence (EI)** is a concept developed by psychologist Daniel Goleman that refers to the ability to recognise, understand and manage one's emotions, as well as the ability to recognise, understand and influence the emotions of others.

Emotional Intelligence consists of several key elements:

- **Self-awareness**
- **Self-regulation**
- **Motivation**
- **Empathy**
- **Social skills**

We will stop to analyse each of these elements to better understand how they relate to the concept of emotional intelligence.

### Self-awareness

Self-awareness is crucial to Emotional Intelligence as it refers your ability to recognise and comprehend your own emotions, thoughts, motivations, and behavioural patterns and the one of others.

- **Do you find yourself capable of identifying how you feel in various situations?**
- **Have you ever reflected on what triggers certain feelings within you or the people around you?**

Understanding the reasons behind your emotions is equally important.

The development of emotional intelligence relies heavily on a solid foundation of self-awareness. It empowers you to make informed decisions, cope with stress more efficiently, and foster healthier interpersonal connections.

## Self-awareness manifests itself on several levels

### Emotional awareness

This involves the **ability to recognise and label your own emotions**. People with high self-awareness can accurately identify and express their feelings. A common example could be when you recognise that you are feeling anxious before giving a presentation and you can articulate, “I am feeling nervous because I am worried about how the audience will perceive my ideas.”

### Self-assessment

It involves the **ability to objectively evaluate your own skills and challenges**. A person with good self-awareness is able to recognise their areas of improvement and work on personal development. Imagine you are assessing yourself, and you realise, “I really need to work on managing my time better if I want to get more done at work and stop procrastinating so much.”

### Self-efficacy

Picture yourself **believing in your ability to tackle challenges** and achieve your goals – that is self-efficacy. It is also about knowing your strengths and weaknesses realistically, like understanding what you excel at and where you might need some extra effort. You are showing self-efficacy now by learning more emotional intelligence and being willing to improve this skill!

## Self-regulation

Emotional self-regulation refers to the ability to effectively manage and regulate your emotions, impulses, and emotional responses in various situations. It involves the ability to maintain emotional control even in times of stress or challenge, as well as to constructively channel emotions.

Some important aspects of self-regulation include:

### Impulse control

The **ability to think before acting** and resist the urge to react impulsively to emotions. One technique that might help you with this would be taking a breath before responding to criticism to avoid a defensive reaction.

### Stress management

It involves the **ability to manage stress in a healthy and effective way**, using strategies such as deep breathing, meditation or other relaxation strategies.

### Emotional flexibility

The **ability to adapt to changing situations** and manage different emotions appropriately according to the context.

### Frustration management

It involves the **ability to deal with frustration constructively**, trying to balance your emotions without losing control. A useful trick could be stepping away briefly to regain composure when you are facing a challenging problem.



**Self-regulation** is essential for emotional well-being and for building effective relationships with others. People with good self-regulation are able to make more informed decisions and avoid impulsive responses that can generate conflicts or negative consequences.

Developing self-regulation involves a process of self-knowledge and practice. **Here are some tips that can help you strengthen emotional regulation:**

- Try to **identify your triggers** by paying attention to situations, people or thoughts.
- **Develop coping strategies** such as deep breathing exercises, progressive muscle relaxation or visualisation techniques to help you calm down when you are experiencing intense emotions.
- **Develop healthy habits** by prioritising regular exercise, adequate sleep, and a balanced diet.
- **Express yourself**, expressing emotions in constructive ways can prevent them from building up and becoming overwhelming.
- **Practise self-compassion** by treating yourself with the same compassion and understanding that you would offer to a friend facing similar challenges.
- **Practise patience and persistence.** Improving emotional regulation is a gradual process, celebrate your progress along the way.
- **Seek professional help**, as a mental health professional can provide personalised strategies and support tailored to your specific needs.



## Motivation

The term Motivation in Psychology refers to the impulse or set of reasons that lead a person to act in a certain way or to seek to achieve specific goals [11,15]. It is the **internal process that energises**, directs and maintains behaviour toward the achievement of a goal. Therefore, motivation can influence choices, efforts and persistence in achieving goals, whether short or long term.

There are different theories that explain motivation, but some of the most studied perspectives include:

### Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory [11]

Abraham Maslow proposed a hierarchy of human needs, from basic needs such as food and security, to higher needs such as self-realisation and personal development. According to this theory, **people are motivated to meet these needs in hierarchical order.**

### Theory of self-determination [13]

This theory focuses on whether motivation comes from internal (intrinsic) or external (extrinsic) factors. **Intrinsic motivation** arises from personal interest, satisfaction, and intrinsic enjoyment in a task, while **extrinsic motivation** comes from external rewards or avoidance of punishment. This theory also highlights the importance of autonomy, competence and social relationship in motivation. In this sense, you would be more motivated when you feel autonomous, competent and socially connected.

### Vroom expectation theory [15]

Victor Vroom proposed that the motivation to perform a task is influenced by the **expectation of achieving a desired result and the assessment of that result.** According to this theory, if you believe that your effort will lead to success and that success is valuable, you will be motivated to undertake the task.

**Motivation** is like your personal fuel, driving you towards success at work and fulfilment in your personal life. Concerning Emotional Intelligence, motivation can help you **set goals that truly matter to you**, overcome obstacles with determination, and build strong connections with others. When we are motivated to learn about ourselves, regulate our feelings, and pursue meaningful objectives, we enhance our overall emotional intelligence.

## Empathy

Empathy is also an integral part of Emotional Intelligence, as it is linked to the **ability to recognise and manage one's and others' emotions**. Developing empathy involves actively listening, showing genuine interest in others, and cultivating a deeper understanding of the emotional experiences of people around us.

Would you like to know more about how Active Listening?

PRIORITY45 virtual course has a unit about this topic.

## Social skills

Social skills are a set of competencies that allow you to interact and communicate effectively with others in various social situations. In emotional intelligence, the term 'social skills' refers to the **skills needed to handle and influence other people's emotions effectively**.

Would you like to know more about how Social Skills?

PRIORITY45 virtual course has a unit about this topic.

**Attention!** This may sound like manipulation, but it has nothing to do with it. This actually implies, for example, the understanding that smiling at people makes them smile back and can therefore make them feel much more positive.

## Benefits of improving Emotional Intelligence

*Picture this:* You are at work, surrounded by colleagues, clients, and superiors. The air hums with productivity, and conversations flow like a well-choreographed dance.



Improving your emotional intelligence in the workplace brings forth a multitude of **significant benefits**. These positive impacts extend not only to **you**, but also to **your team** and the **organisation** as a whole.

As you strengthen your emotional intelligence, you will notice improvements in your leadership skills. Being an **emotionally intelligent leader**, you will gain the ability to **truly understand the needs and motivations of your team members**. This understanding fosters a **collaborative and highly productive work environment**.

Moreover, emotional intelligence is fundamental to decision making. When you possess a high level of emotional intelligence, you can deliberately consider emotions during the decision-making process. This balanced method helps you make informed decisions and deal skilfully with difficult situations.

Lastly, emotional self-regulation empowers you to **stay calm under pressure**. By doing so, you will make decisions that benefit both the organisation and your team members.

Effective **management of interpersonal relationships** is another key benefit of improving your emotional intelligence at work. Your ability to establish and maintain **healthy relationships** with colleagues, clients, and superiors contributes to a positive work environment and effective communication. Your emotional intelligence can facilitate conflict resolution and promote collaboration.

In addition, your emotional intelligence is linked to your personal **well-being** at work and general well-being in your personal life. As you develop this skill, you tend to experience lower levels of stress and enjoy more positive relationships. Your self-awareness and emotional self-regulation allow you to adapt to challenges more easily, maintaining a work-life balance.

## Strategies to improve Emotional Intelligence

Here are some tips you can use to improve your Emotional Intelligence:

### 1 Be more self-aware

Consider tracking any time you feel a strong emotion and taking notes about what caused your feeling.

### 2 Recognise how others feel

You can always ask others how they feel to show that you prioritise their feelings and actions.

### 3 Practise active listening

Try asking questions or repeating important points to show that you have understood them.

### 4 Communicate clearly

Try to be as clear as possible and create multiple channels for others to communicate their feelings with you.

### 5 Empathise

Try to imagine yourself in other people's positions so that you can consider how you might feel if in their situation.

### 6 Be open-minded

Even if you are unsure about a new idea or concept, try to initially consider what it may look like to implement it into daily work, maybe you will be surprised with the result!



### 7 Stay calm under pressure

Try to develop strategies like taking a deep breath or asking for help when in a stressful situation to help you stay calm and thoughtful. Learn to listen to your body's signals and embrace them.

### 8 Express your emotions constructively

Learn to start communicating your emotions, both positive and negative.

## Emotional Intelligence on a lifelong approach

*Picture this:* As you journey through life, emotional intelligence emerges as your trusty sidekick—a secret weapon that significantly **impacts your personal growth and well-being**. From the childhood to the older age, your emotions take centre stage, influencing your decision-making, relationship-building, and the very quality of your existence.

In those early years, it is like you are handed a treasure map— **the map to your own emotions**. You learn to decipher the cryptic language of feelings, unlocking empathy and mastering emotional management. These skills are not just tools; they shape your emotional destiny. And guess what? They set the stage for a successful adulthood.

Fast-forward to the teenage drama and early adulthood rollercoaster. Emotional intelligence becomes the extra boost when tackling life's trickier levels. Think academic crossroads, professional quests, and those heart-to-heart conversations that leave you breathless. It is like having a special ability to understand people and their connections. But here is the twist: emotional intelligence is not a static relic. It is a living, breathing force, a dance between heart and mind. So, embrace it, nurture it, and let it be part of the seasons of your life. Because emotional intelligence is a **dynamic ability that evolves and perfects over time**.

That is why participating in workshops, personal development programs, register in this course or actively seeking experiences that challenge and strengthen your emotional skills greatly contribute to **continued growth**. The pillars of emotional intelligence (self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills) are facets that can be improved and perfected throughout life.



**Your journey of emotional intelligence has just started!** We hope that this unit has helped you to understand the concept and that the strategies showed encourage you to continue with its learning and improving in your daily life.



## Case study: “Search inside yourself”

### Context

In the 2000s, Google conducted an internal project called “Search Inside Yourself” (SIY), which aimed to improve the emotional intelligence skills of its employees. This project was initiated by Chade-Meng Tan, a Google software engineer, and later became a training program in emotional intelligence.

### Objectives

- To improve the effectiveness of communication and collaboration.
- Reduce stress levels and improve the well-being of employees.
- To promote a more positive and productive working environment.



## Implementation

The program “*Search Inside Yourself*” is based on the premise that emotional intelligence can be developed through mindfulness. It includes meditation practices and exercises to improve self-awareness, self-management, empathy and social skills.

## Results

### Improved Communication

Participants reported a significant improvement in the quality of their communication, which led to greater efficiency in teamwork and conflict resolution.

### Stress reduction

Mindfulness exercises contributed to a decrease in stress levels among employees, which had a positive impact on their overall well-being.

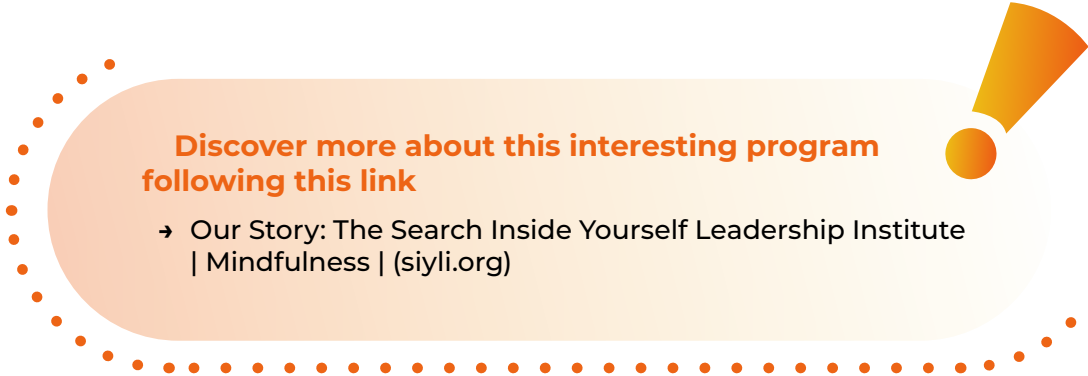
### Positive Cultural Change

As more employees participated in the program, a cultural shift was observed in the company towards greater emotional openness, understanding and mutual support.

## Conclusions

The case of Google highlights how a technology leader recognised the importance of emotional intelligence to **improve the performance and well-being of its employees**. Integrating emotional intelligence practices into a results-oriented business environment proved to be beneficial for both organisational culture and business outcomes. This case underscores the universal relevance of emotional intelligence, even in highly technical and innovation-oriented environments.





**Discover more about this interesting program following this link**

→ Our Story: The Search Inside Yourself Leadership Institute | Mindfulness | (siyli.org)

## Summary

The training unit highlights the importance of Emotional Intelligence in personal well-being and success in various areas of life. Key components of emotional intelligence, such as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills, are addressed.

In addition, the importance of improving emotional intelligence through strategies such as reflection, mindfulness and constructive feedback are also stressed. The unit generally highlights that improving emotional intelligence skills is crucial for personal development and success throughout life, as well as for the engagement of better and positive interactions with others.



U n i t 0 8  
**Social skills**

## Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module, participants shall be able to:



**Understand** the importance and methods of conflict resolution

**Identify** the importance and methods of conflict resolution

**Identify** the terms and elements of relationship management

**Analyse** the importance and methods of conflict resolution

## Content

Conflict resolution

Relationship management

Intergenerational relationships

Rules of respect and tolerance

## Introduction

Imagine conflict resolution as a skill that helps you become a great problem solver. When friends or family have disagreements, conflict resolution helps make everything better. It is important to learn this skill because it turns frowns into smiles and keeps friendships strong. So, understanding how conflicts can be solved can bring peace and happiness to your relationships.

Relationship management is the practice of effectively creating and maintaining connections, whether in professional or personal contexts. Think of it like taking care of a special plant – you give it attention, positive vibes, and watch it grow. Identifying the terms and elements is like having a guidebook for having healthy relationships. It helps you know what to say, how to be positive, and how to make your friendships super strong.

These are some of the topics related to social skills that you will be able to know more about in this unit of PRIORITY45 course!

## The importance of conflict resolution

**Conflict resolution** is the process used by parties to find an amicable solution to problems, whether among friends, family, co-workers, clients, or customers. In both personal and professional relationships, conflicts are natural, and attempting to avoid them is not the solution. Instead, developing good conflict-resolution skills is crucial. These skills enable one to address disputes positively, ensuring a healthy and happy relationship with the other party. Poor conflict resolution skills can exacerbate situations, prolong dispute resolution, and potentially harm relationships significantly [1].

In this chapter, we are going to get familiar with the importance of conflict resolution.

How good do you think you are at conflict resolution?  
Try to think of some examples when you had an argument in your personal life or at work.  
What did you do to try to solve it? Did it work?



So, let's consider some reasons why conflict resolution is so important

### — It can be adjusted according to the situation

Depending on the situation, there are different resolution styles you can adopt. Please, imagine the following situation: a team is working on a high-stakes project with a tight deadline. Two key team members, Alex and Jordan, disagree on the approach to the final phase of the project. Alex believes in following the initial plan strictly, while Jordan suggests an innovative, but risky, method that could save time but jeopardize the project's quality.

Now let's take a look at the five resolution styles and concrete examples of them according to the above-mentioned situation.

### → Avoiding

Here the opposite parties are separated so that they have time to cool down.

The project manager decides to temporarily assign Alex and Jordan to different aspects of the project, giving them time to cool down. This approach is useful in the short term to prevent the conflict from affecting immediate work but will need to be addressed later for a long-term solution.

### → Competing

This style can bring faster results since it deals with the conflict directly, but the disadvantage of this style is that it can bring big damage to a relationship.

In a scenario where the deadline is non-negotiable and the risk of failure is too high, the project manager might decide to assert authority and choose the approach believed to be best for the project's success, typically the one with a proven track record. This might be Alex's method of sticking to the original plan.

### → Accommodating

This style is the complete opposite of competing; in this style, one person gives in to the other person, but it can usually only work if the other is more invested than you or if he/she is an expert in the area discussed.

Recognising Jordan's passion for innovation, Alex decides to accommodate Jordan's approach for a small, less critical part of the project. This shows a willingness to explore new ideas while minimizing risk.

### → Comprising

This is a so-called "lose-lose" style, where both sides agree to make a sacrifice and compromise; although it can help in obtaining peace, it usually fails to resolve deeper issues.

The project manager facilitates a meeting where Alex and Jordan agree to a compromise. They decide to implement Jordan's method on a trial basis for a week. If it shows promise without significant risks, they will continue; otherwise, they will revert to the original plan.

## → Collaborating

This style takes the most time and effort but it usually brings the most successful results and relationships; here each party is considered and everyone is satisfied by the end.

Alex and Jordan, who disagreed on how to do a project, worked together to mix their ideas into a plan that uses a bit of both. This teamwork made the project better and helped them get along.

Several careers are focused on conflict resolutions, including contract negotiators, legal mediators and similar. If you work in these areas, you are usually specialised in the fields of family, education, management, labour and similar and experts in the field of conflict resolution usually work as consultants in different companies which often call an outside mediator when they cannot solve conflicts inside the organisation.

### **If you do not approach to a conflict in a proper manner, this can have serious consequences**

Conflict is inevitable in your work as well as personal life and the manner of handling it determines if the outcome is negative or positive. If you are involved in a conflict and you do not have proper skills on how to handle a conflict, a small disagreement can quickly lead into insults, blame and pain. This can create a stressful and tense working environment as well as to destroyed relationships in your personal life.

Imagine you are at work, and you and a co-worker disagree on how to handle a project. You think it should be done one way, and your co-worker thinks it should be done another way. Instead of talking about it calmly, you both start arguing. You do not listen to each other's points of view, and the disagreement turns into a shouting match.

Because you did not approach the conflict properly, what started as a small disagreement escalated. Now, not only is the project at risk, but your relationship with your co-worker becomes tense and uncomfortable. Other co-workers might also feel the tension, making the workplace stressful for everyone.

The same can happen in your personal life. Let's say you and a friend disagree on where to go for dinner. Instead of discussing it and finding a compromise, you insist on your choice, ignoring your friend's preference. This might hurt your friend's feelings, leading to a bigger argument. What started as a simple choice can result in hurt feelings, a damaged friendship, and an evening ruined.

## Conflict resolution fosters active listening

Active listening plays a significant role in conflict solving, since you cannot solve a conflict if you do not pay attention to what the other person is saying. Active listening involves putting aside assumptions, maintaining an open mind, responding to others using their words, and seeking clarification through questions. In conversations, particularly during disagreements, individuals often neglect genuine listening, merely anticipating their chance to speak. Active listening, on the other hand, emphasizes a concentrated effort to comprehend the perspective of the other person.

Let's say you are in a disagreement with one of your team colleagues about the shift schedule you have to do. Instead of simply arguing for your preferred shifts, you decide to actively listening to each other's constraints. With this, you might know that your colleague has a familiar commitment, and you have a training session. You should now try to figure out how to find a compromise between both needs.

This means you are not just hearing their words while planning your next argument in your head. You are actually trying to understand their point of view. You are paying attention to not just their words, but also how they are saying them.

By doing this, you are practising active listening. You put aside your immediate reaction of wanting to win the argument. Instead, you ask questions like, "Why is it important for you?" and "What exactly are your plans?" This shows you are interested in their perspective, not just your own.

The **PRIORITY45** has a unit just focused on **Active Listening**, where you will find many useful tips on how to develop your active listening skills.

## It teaches patience

Conflict resolution is a time-consuming process where the goal is to ensure that everyone is heard, and their desires are understood. The complexity of a conflict directly impacts the time required for resolution. Even seemingly straightforward conflicts can become time-consuming if multiple people are involved. The collaborating or "win-win" approach tends to yield the best results but demands patience, as it is a lengthier process.



Let's imagine a workplace scenario in which a team is tasked with choosing a strategy for a future project. Some team members favour strategy A because they believe it is more in line with the organisation's values, while others prefer strategy B because they think it will produce better results based on previous data. Initially, the decision seems simple, but divergent opinions complicate the process.

Instead of rushing to choose a strategy or insisting on their favourite option, the team decides to approach the decision-making process with patience. The team decides to approach the decision-making process with patience. One team member explains the potential benefits of strategy A in terms of the organisation's culture and brand, while another highlights the proven success of strategy B in similar projects. This process is not quick. It involves a lot of discussion, and sometimes you need to take breaks and come back to the conversation later. It might feel slow, especially when you are eager to get started on the project. But this patience allows for a deeper understanding of each team member's viewpoint and priorities.

### It helps you separate conflict from the people involved.

In times of conflict, the tendency to attribute negative feelings to others can escalate the situation into a divisive "good vs. evil" scenario, hindering progress. This mind-set shifts attention away from the actual conflict to the individuals involved, leading to a personalisation of the issue. In conflict resolution, it is crucial to aim for emotional neutrality, separating the conflict from judgments about the people involved. By focusing on the issue at hand rather than the individuals, open communication becomes more achievable, fostering the potential for resolution.

Imagine you are part of a group project, and there is a disagreement on which approach to take for the project's next phase. One team member, Alex, suggests a creative approach, while another, Jordan, believes a more traditional method is best. The discussion heats up, and feelings start to get hurt.

Instead of focusing on the merits of each approach, the disagreement turns personal. Comments like "You always have to do things your way" or "You are not open to new ideas" start to fly. This is where the conflict becomes more about Alex and Jordan themselves rather than the project approach. The situation escalates into a "good vs. evil" scenario, where each sees the other as the problem, not their differing views on the project.

### It teaches more open communication

Effective conflict resolution skills remain useful even after a conflict concludes. Attributes such as active listening, patience, and emotional impartiality continue to be crucial in relationships marked by past conflicts. Sustaining open communication is essential to ensure ongoing satisfaction. This proactive approach not only prevents potential conflicts from escalating but also plays a preventive role in curbing the emergence of new conflicts. In essence, conflict resolution extends beyond resolving immediate issues to creating a foundation that discourages future conflicts.

Let's say you and your best friend had a big argument a few months ago about a trip you were planning together. You disagreed on the destination, the budget, and almost everything else. It was a tough time, but you managed to work through it by practising active listening, being patient with each other, and keeping your emotions in check. You found a compromise and ended up having a great trip.

Now, the conflict is in the past, but the skills you both developed did not just disappear. You have noticed that your conversations are different now. You listen more carefully to what the other is saying, you are more patient when you discuss plans, and you make a conscious effort to understand each other's feelings without letting emotions take over. This new way of communicating has made your relationship stronger and more open.

### It teaches assertiveness.

Clear communication is essential in conflict resolution. Many struggle to express feelings or state their needs due to discomfort or nervousness. A skilled mediator fosters an environment that encourages clarity. Assertiveness, when properly employed, can expedite resolution, dispelling misconceptions that associate assertiveness with aggression.

Imagine you are working on a team project and you feel like your ideas are being overlooked. You are frustrated, but you are also worried about speaking up because you do not want to seem pushy or aggressive. This is where learning assertiveness as part of conflict resolution can really make a difference. During the meeting, you say something like, "I have noticed that I have had difficulty getting my ideas heard in our discussions. I believe I have valuable contributions to make, and I would like to find a way for us to share our ideas more openly." By saying this, you are not attacking anyone; you are simply stating your feelings and what you hope to achieve.

### It teaches empathy.

Empathy is a vital skill in improving relationships, be it with co-workers, romantic partners, or family. It serves as a foundation for key conflict-resolution skills like active listening, patience, and open communication. Strengthening empathy enables a deeper understanding of others' feelings, fostering emotional connection and respect. This, in turn, facilitates smoother conflict resolution as individuals feel heard and valued.

### It helps you deal with stress.

Conflicts induce stress, feelings of helplessness, frustration, or anger. The fear of escalation often leads to avoidance, though burying issues can worsen them over time. Acquiring conflict resolution skills helps alleviate the intimidation and stress associated with them, making you more equipped to address issues that you might have otherwise ignored.

Imagine you and a close friend keep clashing over plans, causing you both stress. Initially, you avoid discussing the problem, hoping to dodge further tension, but the issue lingers, making you both feel uneasy and straining your friendship.

Deciding to tackle the problem, you learn some key conflict resolution skills: open communication, understanding the other's viewpoint, and expressing your own needs without blame. With this new approach, you talk to your friend, focusing on finding a solution together rather than winning an argument.



### It helps groups reach their goals

Workplace conflicts can strongly impact productivity and can lead to the break-up of an organisation if they are poorly managed or ignored. The failure to address disputes properly can diminish employee trust, leading to resignations. Conflict resolution, despite temporarily diverting attention from projects, is crucial if an organisation is to achieve its objectives and maintain employee confidence. Ignoring conflicts can have much more serious consequences.

Let's say you are part of a small start-up team working on launching a new app. The development team prefers to delay the launch to perfect the app's features, while the marketing team pushes for an earlier launch to capitalise on a trending market opportunity.

Instead of letting this disagreement derail the project, the team decides to have a structured discussion. They use conflict resolution strategies to ensure everyone's perspectives are heard. Through this process, they agree on a compromise: a phased launch strategy. This allows the app to hit the market as planned, addressing the marketing team's concerns, while also leaving room for ongoing improvements, satisfying the development team.

### It sparks innovation.

With conflict resolution, everyone has an opportunity to express their thoughts. Using skills such as active listening and patience allows diverse perspectives and novel ideas to emerge. Conflict, viewed positively, signifies organisational diversity. Without disagreements, there may be harmony, but innovation may be lacking. Conflict resolution skills are crucial for turning conflicts into opportunities for positive outcomes [2].

Imagine a team tasked with presenting a new marketing campaign. There are disagreements about the format of the presentation: one member favours a set of visual slides, while another suggests an interactive session. Instead of letting this hinder progress, you discuss further. Through open dialogue, they innovate by combining the two ideas. The final presentation includes visually appealing slides complemented by interactive elements, such as live demonstrations. This hybrid approach satisfies all perspectives and leads to a successful outcome.

**So, let's give an overview of why conflict resolution is important:**



It can be adjusted according to the situation	It teaches assertiveness
If not approached appropriately, it can have serious consequences	It teaches empathy
It fosters active listening	It helps you deal with stress
It teaches patience	It helps groups reach their goals
It helps you separate conflict from the people involved	It sparks innovation
It teaches more open communication	

## Methods and skills for conflict resolution

After reflecting on the importance of conflict resolution, you are going to get familiar with methods and skills which will enhance your skills in conflict resolution.

**The ability to successfully resolve conflict depends on your ability to:**

- **Manage stress quickly while remaining calm and alert**  
This helps you in reading and interpreting verbal as well as nonverbal communication.
- **Control your behaviour and emotions**  
This enables you to communicate your needs without threatening, intimidating, or punishing other people.
- **Pay attention to what feelings are expressed by other people and what words they use.**
- **Respect differences and avoid disrespectful words and actions**  
This will almost always help you resolve a problem faster [3].

**For a successful resolution of a conflict, you need to learn and practice two very important skills:**

### → Quick stress relief

The ability to quickly relieve stress will enable you to stay balanced, focused, and in control, despite of challenges you are facing. The best way to release stress quickly is to engage one or more of your senses: sight, sound, taste, smell, touch or to use movement.

Did you know that squeezing a stress ball, smelling a relaxing scent, tasting a nice cup of tea, or looking at a favourite photograph can help you relieve stress quickly? Try it out.

## → Emotional awareness

Emotional awareness is the ability to be comfortable with your emotions which enables you to react in constructive ways, even if you are under attack. It is also crucial for understanding yourself and other people, which enables you to communicate effectively or resolve disagreements.

### Emotional awareness helps you to

- Understand what is upsetting other people.
- Understand yourself and what is really troubling you.
- Stay motivated until the conflict is resolved.
- Interest and influence other people [3].

Table 1: Unhealthy and healthy responses to a conflict

UNHEALTHY RESPONSES TO A CONFLICT	HEALTHY RESPONSES TO A CONFLICT
A person is not able to respond and recognise the things that are important for the other person.	A person is able to empathise with the other person and his/her viewpoint.
A person reacts in an explosive, angry, hurtful, and resentful manner.	A person reacts in a calm, non-defensive, and respectful manner.
A person reacts with the withdrawal of love, which results in isolation, rejection, shaming, and fear of abandonment.	A person is prepared to forgive and forget, and to move past the conflict without holding resentments or anger.
A person is not able to compromise or see the other person's side.	A person is able to seek compromise and avoid punishment.
A person feels fearful or tries to avoid the conflict because he/she expects a bad outcome.	A person is aware that facing conflict head-on is the best solution for both sides.

Emotional awareness is very connected to the **Emotional Intelligence** concept.

Do you know what this is and how to improve it? *Check in* the unit with the same name in **Module 2 of PRIORITY45** course.

## Non-verbal communication and conflict resolution

**Non-verbal** signs or body language, including gestures, tone of your voice, facial expressions and postures are very important in helping you understand what another person is actually saying and enable you to respond in a proper manner and build trust, as well as to get to the root of the problem.

It is your emotional awareness that determines your ability to accurately read another person. The stronger your awareness is, the easier it will be for you to recognise the wordless clues that reveal what other people are feeling. It is important to be aware of what you are transmitting to others during conflict, and if your words match your body language. Saying “I’m fine,” but at the same time clenching your teeth and looking away, is basically signalling you are not “fine.” Try using a calm tone of voice, a reassuring touch, or an interested facial expression instead [3].

The **PRIORITY45** has a unit just focused on **Communication**, where you will find many useful tips on how to enhance your communication skills.



### Some tips for managing and resolving conflict

Here are some tips for managing and resolving conflict:

#### 1 Pay attention not only to spoken words but also to the underlying emotions.

True listening establishes a profound connection with your own needs and emotions, as well as those of others. It enhances understanding, imparts valuable information, and facilitates effective communication when it is your moment to express yourself.

When someone in your family seems upset but says they are “fine,” you notice their tone and ask how they are really feeling, deepening your understanding and connection.

## 2 Prioritise conflict resolution over the desire to win or prove yourself “right.”

Emphasise preserving and fortifying the relationship rather than winning in the argument. Always approach the other person and their perspective with respect.

In an argument with your partner about household chores, you focus on finding a fair solution rather than proving your point, valuing your relationship over being right.

## 3 Recognise the right moment to release something.

If no consensus can be reached, be open to agreeing to disagree. Sustaining an argument requires the involvement of two individuals. When a conflict seems unproductive, you have the option to disengage and proceed forward [3].

After a long debate with a family member about a sensitive topic, you both agree to disagree, preserving your relationship and moving forward peacefully.

## 4 Understand the conflict.

You should define clearly your own position and interests in the conflict, but at the same time do not forget to understand those of your opponent.

In a workplace conflict over the allocation of resources, one colleague prioritises marketing and the other research and development. Each must clarify their position: the marketing professional focuses on sales, while the researcher values product quality. By recognising these perspectives, they can reach a compromise that benefits both parties.



## 5 Communicate with the other side.

You can use the following tips for productive talks: listen, allow others to participate, talk about your emotions, listen actively, speak about yourself, not the others, be concrete, but flexible at the same time, and do not judge too early.

During a disagreement with a friend, you express your feelings without blaming them and listen actively, leading to a more productive and less confrontational conversation.

## 6 Brainstorm possible resolutions.

Before calling a brainstorming session, carefully consider the meeting's setup. Craft a precise purpose statement to guide the discussion. Call for a smaller group, ideally consisting of 5-8 individuals. Select a venue distinct from your typical setting, preferably an informal space that fosters comfort and safety. Seek an impartial facilitator who can organise the meeting objectively without injecting personal sentiments into the conflict.

Planning a family reunion with varying opinions, you organise a small, informal meeting where everyone feels comfortable sharing ideas, leading to creative and agreeable plans for everyone.

## 7 Choose the best solution.

Following the meeting, you need to assess and determine the most suitable resolution. Evaluate the ideas generated during the brainstorming session and identify the most promising ones by marking them with a star. These highlighted ideas will serve as the points for the subsequent conflict resolution process. Schedule a dedicated time to thoroughly discuss and evaluate these chosen ideas, ultimately deciding on the most effective solution.

After a family meeting about how to spend a holiday, you start the ideas everyone likes most, like a beach trip or a mountain cabin stay. Later, you all decide together that the beach offers something for everyone, making it the best choice.

## 8 Explore alternatives.

To find another option, begin by thinking of lots of ideas. Then, look at the good and bad points of each idea. Decide which option makes sense and is doable. Also, think about ways to make it even better [4].

After considering everyone's preferences and practical aspects such as distance and budget, they choose a nearby seaside resort. To make everything even better, they plan activities such as beach volleyball and a barbecue, ensuring a fun and memorable experience for everyone.

## Glasers' Three-Step Strategy for Conflict Resolution

Now let's take a look at a simple, three-step method to solve disagreements. This strategy helps you understand conflicts better and find a way to resolve them peacefully.

**Peter and Susan Glaser, conflict management consultants, advise a three-step strategy for resolving conflict [5]:**

- Prove that you understand the other side.
- Admit that you are part of the problem.
- If the conversation does not end well, try again.



Let us check this strategy with a fictional conflict resolution scenario.

Let us imagine that there is a conflict between the managers of two departments. John, Product Manager, has changed the price of a product and forgot to let Jane, the Marketing Manager, know about this. Because of this, the marketing team sent incorrect prices to customers and later on they had to send another email apologising for the error.

### How can we solve this conflict?

Rather than blaming John, Jane uses her questioning and listening skills to ask him to explain why he made this decision. John explains that a very important client was pressuring him to lower the price of the product to avoid losing a contract. She expresses her empathy and tells John that she also has had problems with this client [5].

## The importance and elements of empathy

It is time to find out more about the importance and elements of empathy and explore how understanding and sharing the feelings of others can transform your relationships.

**Many people talk about empathy, saying it is a good thing, but not everyone makes it a priority.**

Did you know that  
98% of people  
can understand  
and share others'  
feelings?

There are a few exceptions like people who present symptoms related to psychopathy, narcissism or sociopathy, who may struggle with this. Some people on the Autism Spectrum may also find it challenging, but many believe they can still connect with others emotionally, just in a different way. Even though most people can empathise, but sometimes they do not do it much [6]

But why is empathy important? Can we learn it, or are we born with a certain amount? Are some people just naturally better at it? Is practising empathy as crucial as people say it is?

**Check out the following chapter to find the answers.**



## The importance and elements of empathy

Empathy is incredibly important in your daily life. It helps you care for others, understand your friends, family, co-workers, and even strangers, making a positive difference in the world.

In your personal life, empathy is key to maintaining strong relationships. If you focus only on yourself, your friendships and romantic relationships will suffer. Everyone has unique thoughts and experiences, and without trying to understand each other, the people you care about may feel neglected.

At work, empathy plays a crucial role too. Getting along with your co-workers is essential, whether you are on the same project or not. A friendly atmosphere is vital, and without empathy, conflicts can arise. Bosses need to be empathetic to ensure they treat employees fairly and avoid issues like overworking or being overly strict.

Globally, empathy is vital. It drives people to support each other, especially during challenging times like disasters. Without empathy, the world would be a much colder and less cooperative place.

People have come up with different ways to talk about empathy, and two psychologists, Daniel Goleman and Paul Ekman, have defined three types: cognitive, emotional, and compassionate.



Let's take a closer look at these three types using a practical situation where you imagine you see a friend looking down because they did not do well on a test.

### — Cognitive empathy

It means understanding how someone else feels and figuring out what they might be thinking.

*If you possess cognitive empathy, you understand why your friend is upset and think about how failing a test would make you feel.*

### — Emotional empathy

Or affective empathy, is when you can feel the same emotions as someone else. For example, if you see someone sad, it makes you feel sad too.

*If you possess emotional empathy, seeing your friend upset makes you feel sad too.*

### — Compassionate empathy

Or empathic concern, goes beyond understanding and feeling. It is when you take those feelings and turn them into actions, like doing something to help [6].

*You notice that a colleague is struggling with a heavy workload and looming deadlines, instead of just acknowledging their difficulty, you can offer to help them with their tasks, helping them to prioritise or giving them emotional support through attentive listening.*

## Are we born with empathy, or can it be taught?

While some evidence suggests that being able to understand others might be in our genes, it is also true that we can get better at empathy. One good way to become more understanding is to learn it when we are kids. This is called “emotional intelligence” in school. Teaching kids to think about how others feel helps them become more empathic.

If a child does something unkind, like hurting or teasing another child, it is good to ask them how they think the other person feels. You can also ask them how they would feel if someone treated them that way. This way, they can learn to imagine how others feel and understand why it is important not to be mean.

This works for positive things too. Like when kids learn to share because they like it when others share with them. Teaching kindness is easy because kids usually want to be treated nicely, just like they treat others [6].

## How to improve your level of

Even in adulthood is possible to improve this skill.

**There are two very important ways to do this:**

### — Read stories

Surprisingly, reading stories can make you more understanding of others. Recent studies found that when people read fiction, their brains feel like they are in a whole new world. For instance, in a study, people who read *Twilight* felt like they were vampires, and those who read *Harry Potter* felt like they were wizards [6, 7].

This is important because it shows that reading allows us to connect with people and groups that are different from us. Even if you are in the United States, reading about someone in Europe can help you understand and relate to their life.

In a study, *The Guardian* said, “In fiction...we can understand characters’ actions from their point of view, by entering into their situations and minds.” Basically, books let us see what is going on inside someone’s head, even if we cannot do that in real life [6, 7].



### — Listen

Sometimes, it is easier to get along with people who seem like us. But this way of thinking can be a problem in a diverse place or when we do not show care for those outside our usual group [6, 7].

Being understanding helps make our relationships better, lowers our stress, and makes us feel good about ourselves and our lives in a real way.

**Here are more good things about being understanding:**

- **It keeps us healthy** (less stress and negativity, which means we stay in better shape and have stronger immune systems).
- **It makes life happier.**
- **It makes us better at talking to others.**
- **It helps us work well with a team.**
- **It makes our workplace healthy.**
- **It works in all kinds of relationships.**
- **It eliminates negative feelings.**
- **Be real about how you feel.**

When we have a problem with someone or something hard for us, it is helpful to admit and talk about our feelings like fear, sadness, or anger. This is a good way to stop being defensive and deal with what is going on. It also helps us understand and care about ourselves, the other person, and even the situation causing the problem.

### — Imagine What It is Like for Them

Even though it is not always easy to really “get” how someone else feels or what they are going through, it is super important to try to imagine it. The more we are open to thinking about their perspective, the more kindness, understanding, and care we can have. Especially now, with everything going on like the uncertain politics and the pandemic stress, it is even more crucial to be compassionate every day. To change this, it is important to try to understand people who are different from us. To be more understanding, we might need to question our ideas and biases and try to see things from someone else’s viewpoint.

### — Forgive Yourself and Others

Forgiving is a big and helpful thing we can do in life. It helps us feel better, let go of bad feelings, and have a peaceful and happy life. But, the first step in forgiving is to forgive ourselves [6, 7].

## Why is it Important to have empathy in the workplace?

Understanding others, called empathy, is an important skill for leaders. It helps make the work better and more effective. If you are a leader or just a part of the team who cares about and understands your team and other team members, it can:

### Make talking easier.

When you are a leader who understands your team, you can talk to them in a way that works for each person. Changing how you talk, like using different body language and tone, shows that you are listening. When employees feel difficult, they can talk better too.

### Create new ideas.

Empathy helps you see what your team needs and thinks, which can lead to new and creative solutions to problems. You might think of ideas you had not thought of before and find ways to connect with customers.



### Help improve customer service.

Using empathy in customer service means you can figure out what your customers need and want. When a customer is upset, listening and responding with kindness makes them feel important and more likely to keep doing business with your company.

### Build strong relationships

When you are a leader who cares about your team, they feel important and trust you more. When they share ideas, listen and encourage them. This helps you connect with your team and work together well [8].

## Elements of empathy

Are you ready to explore the different parts that make up empathy? You will learn how to understand, feel, and respond to the emotions of others, making your connections with people stronger and more meaningful.

### Daniel Goleman found five important parts of empathy:

#### — Understanding Others

This is the main part of empathy. It means understanding how others feel and see things and actively trying to deal with them.

#### — Developing Others

This means taking action to help others with their needs and problems, encouraging them to grow and be their best.

#### — Service Orientation

This is about putting the customer's needs first and finding ways to make them happy and loyal.



### – Leveraging Diversity

This is the ability to create opportunities by bringing together different kinds of people and celebrating their unique skills and talents.

### – Political Awareness

This part of empathy is not about being manipulative. It is about understanding and sensing the feelings of a group of people and responding to them effectively [9].

## The term and elements of relationship management

Relationship management it is about keeping good and positive relationships between a company and its clients. But also about managing and keeping positive relationships with everyone in your life, like your partner, family, siblings, or even your work friends and colleagues.

Relationship management is the skill of helping people become their best selves. We all know that spending time with others shapes who we are. So, when you spend time with someone, it is crucial to create an environment where both of you can naturally grow. Having positive vibes in all your relationships is really important. A fantastic influencer has excellent people skills, and you can learn and teach these skills. The more you improve at them, the better you can handle your relationships at work and at home [10].

Similarly, making sure relationships are well taken care of is very important for a company to do well. [Here are some reasons why having good relationships at work is helpful:](#)



### → Keeping Customers for a Long Time.

For a company to do really well, it is important to have good and lasting relationships with customers. Managing relationships helps the company have better, stronger, and long-lasting connections with its customers.

### → Boosting Your Creativity.

Having good connections with our co-workers makes the workplace happy and lets us be creative and show off our skills.

### → Aid in Advancing Your Career.

It is crucial to get along well with people, and by “well,” we mean being loyal and having relationships built on trust. If your boss trusts you and your colleagues like working with you, that is when they will talk positively about you to others. These conversations can lead to many career opportunities as well [10].

## Elements of relationship management



**Now, let's talk about the important parts of managing relationships:**

### Communicate Well and Clear

Relationships are not something you can just start and then ignore. Think of them like plants – they need water to grow. Similarly, relationships need communication to stay strong and get even better. For a relationship to grow, you must spend your time, energy, and effort to keep it up. This applies to all relationships, whether they are at work or in your personal life.

### Be positive

It is important to stay positive, both with yourself and others, even when things get tough. Being positive is like a magnet – it attracts people and helps you make friends and keep relationships strong in your life.

## Develop Interpersonal Skills

If you think you are not good at talking with people, and that's why your relationships aren't going well, do not worry. You can learn how to be better. Learning these skills is important because it helps you talk and connect with others, and even influence them.

To live a happy and healthy life, it is crucial to have strong, positive relationships in all parts of your life. This includes your friends, family, neighbours, and co-workers. Having problems with any of them can make you feel stressed. Our relationships affect both our personal and work lives. Good relationships at home make life easier and happier, and the same goes for having good relationships at work – it can make us feel happy and satisfied [10].

## Take responsibility for what is being said

Always be accountable for what you say, and do not give different messages that might contradict each other. Once words are spoken, they can't be taken back, similar to a sword coming out of its sheath. It is a good idea to think before you speak, because what you say might be remembered and you could be held responsible for it later on.

## Give respect to everybody

It is nice to treat everyone with respect. This isn't just about relationships; it is also about being polite and respecting people's rights. Everyone deserves respect, and self-respect is really important to people. Usually, when you show respect, you get it in return. Asking for opinions and considering different viewpoints leads to more ideas, helps make good decisions, and builds friendships and good relationships.

## Develop trust

Trust is the foundation of any relationship, be it with family or colleagues. Trust makes communication and teamwork smoother, like a good family. In a trustworthy environment, negative feelings like threats and jealousy do not belong. Leaders do not need to spend time on elaborate surveillance; openness and honesty in interactions are enough. Transparency adds to a secure atmosphere, letting individuals focus on their work and self-improvement rather than worrying about others' thoughts. [11]

## Summary

Conflict resolution transforms disagreements into opportunities for growth and understanding, both in personal and professional settings. It involves active listening, patience, and a focus on problem-solving rather than winning an argument.

In this unit, you have learnt about the significance of properly approaching conflicts to prevent negative outcomes like stress, broken relationships, and diminished trust. You were also introduced to various conflict resolution styles—avoiding, competing, accommodating, compromising, and collaborating—with collaborating often leading to the most successful outcomes. You have also learnt more about the importance of separating the conflict from the individuals involved, encouraging open communication and assertiveness without aggression.

Furthermore, you have found out more about the role of empathy in understanding and connecting with others, offering practical examples of cognitive, emotional, and compassionate empathy. Strategies to improve empathy as an adult, such as reading fiction and engaging in active listening, were presented to you. The unit concludes with an overview of relationship management, underscoring the need for clear communication, positivity, and trust to maintain and strengthen connections in all areas of life.

# Glossary

Main concepts  
of the Units

## Unit 01

# Leadership

### **Autocratic leadership**

A leadership style characterized by centralized decision-making and strict control over followers, with little input or participation from subordinates.

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### **Boss**

A person in a position of authority within an organization, responsible for overseeing and directing the work of others, often associated with hierarchical structures and formal authority.

---

### **Bureaucratic leadership**

Leadership focused on enforcing strict rules, procedures, and regulations, often resulting in hierarchical structures and adherence to formalities.

---

### **Laissez-faire leadership**

A hands-off approach where leaders provide minimal guidance or direction, allowing individuals or teams significant autonomy in decision-making and task execution.

---

### **Leadership**

Involves inspiring and guiding individuals or groups towards a common goal.

---

## Unit 02

# Communication

### **Assertiveness**

Expressing your feelings, thoughts, and needs directly and respectfully, without infringing on the rights of others.

---

### **Awareness**

Knowing about something, or being conscious of events, feelings, or sensory experiences.

---

### **Body language**

The use of physical cues, including posture, gestures, and facial expressions, to convey emotions, attitudes, and intentions during communication.

---

### **Democratic leadership**

Leadership that encourages participation, collaboration, and shared decision-making among team members, fostering inclusivity, empowerment, and accountability.

---

### **Eye Contact**

Direct visual engagement between speaker and listener, conveying attentiveness, respect, and interest while fostering connection and understanding.

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### **Non-verbal Communication**

The process of conveying a message without the use of words, which can include facial expressions, body language, gestures, posture, and tone of voice.

---

### **Verbal communication**

Is the exchange of information, thoughts, and ideas through spoken words.

## Unit 03

# Active Listening

### Active Listening

Paying close attention to what someone is saying, asking questions, and showing that you understand, to fully receive the message being communicated.

## Unit 04

# Teamwork

### Action plans

Detailed outlines of steps to achieve specific goals, providing clarity, direction, and accountability in leadership initiatives.

---

### Deadlines

Are specific points in time by which certain tasks, projects, or objectives are expected to be completed

---

### Delegation

The process of assigning responsibility and authority to someone else to complete a task, while maintaining accountability for the outcome.

---

### Effectiveness

The degree to which something achieves its intended goals or produces the desired outcomes. It's a measure of how well a process, action, or strategy accomplishes its intended purpose and delivers the expected results.

---



**Efficiency**

The ability to achieve desired outcomes with minimal waste of resources, including time, money, and effort.

---

**Team building**

Collective term for various types of activities used to enhance social relations and define roles within teams, often involving collaborative tasks.

**Unit 05****Cooperation****Adaptability**

Ability or willingness to change in order to suit different conditions.

---

**Brainstorming**

A group activity where individuals come up with ideas or solutions to a problem in an open and unrestrained manner, encouraging creative thinking and the generation of a large number of ideas.

---

**Work-Life Balance**

The equilibrium between professional responsibilities and personal life, where both areas are given attention and neither is neglected.

## Unit 07

# Emotional Intelligence

### Awareness

Knowing about something, or being conscious of events, feelings, or sensory experiences.

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### Cognitive empathy

Understanding how someone else feels and figuring out what they might be thinking.

---

### Compassionate Empathy

Understanding someone's feelings and experiences with a desire to help and support them, combining both emotional understanding and taking action to alleviate their distress.

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### Emotional awareness

The ability to be comfortable with your emotions which enables you to react in constructive ways, even if you are under attack

---

### Emotional Empathy

The ability to feel and share another person's emotions, creating a sense of shared experience and understanding.

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### Emotional Intelligence

Ability to recognise, understand and manage our own emotions, as well as the ability to perceive and manage the emotions of others.

---

### Empathy

The capacity to understand or feel what another person is experiencing from within their frame of reference, essentially putting oneself in their shoes.

---

### Mantra

A phrase or word used repetitively to focus attention and maintain concentration during listening, aiding in minimizing internal distractions.

## Unit 08

# Social Skills

### **Accommodating resolution style**

Resolution style where one person gives in to the other person, but it can usually only work if the other is more invested than you or if he/she is an expert in the area discussed.

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### **Avoiding resolution style**

Resolution style where the opposite parties are separated so that they have time to cool down

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### **Collaborating resolution style**

Resolution style which takes the most time and effort but it usually brings the most successful results and relationships; here each party is considered and everyone is satisfied by the end.

---

### **Competing Resolution Style**

A conflict resolution approach where one party aims to win the conflict at the expense of the other party, prioritizing their own needs and objectives over those of others.

---

### **Compromising resolution style**

A conflict resolution approach where both parties give up something to reach a mutually acceptable solution, balancing some degree of satisfaction and sacrifice for all involved.

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### **Conflict**

A situation where there are opposing ideas, beliefs, opinions, or actions between people, making it difficult for them to agree.

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**Conflict Resolution**

The process of finding a peaceful solution to a disagreement or conflict between parties.

---

**Mediator**

A neutral third party who assists in negotiating an agreement or resolving a conflict between others without imposing their own opinions or decisions.

---

**Political Awareness**

The understanding of political dynamics, power relationships, and social issues within a group or society, and the ability to navigate or influence these elements effectively.

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**Resolution Style**

The approach or method a person uses to address and resolve conflicts or disputes.

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**Social Skills**

The abilities used to communicate, interact, and build relationships with others effectively, including listening, empathy, and conflict resolution.



## Leadership

- The importance of being an ethical leader and how to become one
- The importance of Empathy in the Workplace
- Authoritarian Leadership
- Collaborative Leadership: Definition, Examples and Tips
- Leadership Styles – the most common and how to find your style
- Ten Leadership Skills for Effective Leaders
- Motivation: The Driving Force Behind Our Actions
- What is Effective Communication? Skills for Work, School and Life
- Eight Common Leadership Styles
- Effective Leadership: Why It's Important and How It's Achieved
- The Importance of Time: 3 Rules for Effective Leadership

## Communication

- Human Communication
- Communication Styles Quiz and Assessment
- How to Speak Body Language
- 5 tips on How to Communicate More Effectively | Brian Tracy
- Communication and Group Dynamics in Adult Education
- Communication with Adult Learners
- Active Listening and Open Communication
- What is Communication?
- Communication styles
- 5 Types of Communication Styles in Workplace

## Teamwork

- What is teamwork?
- Teamwork training: how to make it work
- What is teamwork? Including definition and characteristics
- What will make or break your next role?
- The Advantages of Working in a Team
- 8 Useful Ways to Enhance Teamwork in the Workplace

## Cooperation

- Importance of Cooperation & Getting Along With Others in the Workplace: Career Development
- The 7 Keys to Creative Collaboration
- Cultivating Collaboration: Don't Be So Defensive! | Jim Tamm | TEDxSantaCruz
- Teams Start with Human Connections | Matt Eng | TEDxSanAntonio
- The power of collaboration: Dr. Shelle VanEtten de Sánchez at TEDxABQWomen
- Professional Development: Collaboration in the Workplace
- 6 Steps Building a Collaborative Team Environment
- 5 Reasons Why Effective Teamwork is Important for all Organisations
- The Importance of Teamwork in Entrepreneurship
- Responsibility vs. Accountability vs. OWNERSHIP | Team Performance | HR and Business Leaders

## Emotional Intelligence

- Daniel Goleman Introduces Emotional Intelligence | Big Think
- Strategies to be more emotionally intelligent | Daniel Goleman | WOBI
- Leading with Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace
- What is emotional intelligence?
- Emotional intelligence at work: Why IQ isn't everything | Big Think
- Alfred & Shadow - A short story about emotions (education psychology health animation)
- Emotional Intelligence (EI) in the Workplace

## Social Skills

- The Importance of Conflict Management and How to Implement it
- Conflict Resolution in the Workplace for Managers
- Six Benefits of Conflict Resolution for Effective Managers
- Why Conflict Resolution is Important for Your Business
- The Importance of Conflict Management
- Conflict Management
- Why the World Needs an Empathy Revolution
- Empathy: how to feel and respond to emotions of others
- Ten Key Reasons Why Building Empathy is Important for Career Success
- What is Empathy?
- Five Reasons Why Empathy is Important in Relationships
- Understanding other's feelings: what is empathy and why we need it?
- Empathy is the most important Leadership Skill According to Research
- Relationship Management Skills (examples and helpful tips)
- What is Relationship Management?



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# PRIORITY 45



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